

**Driving Market Change: A Multi-Level Perspective on
Institutional Disruption and Defense**

by

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Abstract

In recent years, many industries – from transportation and accommodation to finance and automobiles – have been disrupted by platform businesses that ostensibly remove middlemen from market transactions. Much of this work can be traced to Silicon Valley-based firms that employ technology to connect consumers to one another or directly to companies, cutting out – or minimizing the role of – intermediaries in the process. Driven by an ideology that disdains hierarchy and favours direct connections, these market entrants have disrupted taken-for-granted practices in disparate industries that had long been home to intermediated market arrangements – arrangements which were themselves historically inscribed with ideology – ushering in an “era of disintermediation” (Houle 2011, p. 141). In some markets, this has provoked impassioned engagement from different actors in support of, or opposition to, the market entrant’s challenge. However, despite the spread of such disruptions, we still know relatively little about their dynamics, or the work done by different actors in responding to them.

Drawing on Wright and Zammuto’s (2013) multi-level conceptualization of field change and Bourdieu’s (1977) notion of doxa, I explore the ongoing disruption occurring in the field of automobile distribution spurred by the entry of Tesla Motors, a company that employs a direct-to-consumer model in a market long characterized by intermediated channels. Utilizing archival, interview, and netnographic data, I develop an account of the ideologically-driven institutional work conducted by different actors as they endeavor to bring about or prevent field-level change in the wake of this disruption.

I find marketers and consumers engaging in three novel forms of institutional work; in developing these findings, I also extend theorization around marketplace moralism and market-based social movements. In addition, I trace the development of this work over time to create an

account of doxic market disruption. In discussing my findings, I outline implications for studies of market dynamics, marketing channels, institutional work, and cultural branding.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In recent years, an array of industries – from transportation and accommodation to finance and automobiles – have been disrupted by platform businesses that ostensibly remove middlemen from market transactions (Gupta 2017; Pisani 2017; Schiller 2018; Shinal 2016). Much of this work can be traced to Silicon Valley-based firms that employ technology to connect consumers to one another or directly to companies, cutting out – or at least minimizing the role of – intermediaries in the process. Driven by an ideology that disdains hierarchy and favours direct connections (Barbrook and Cameron 1995), these market entrants have disrupted taken-for-granted practices in disparate industries that had long been home to intermediated market arrangements – arrangements which were themselves historically inscribed with ideology – ushering in an “era of disintermediation” (Houle 2011, p. 141). In some markets, this has provoked impassioned engagement from different actors in support of, or opposition to, the market entrant’s challenge. The nature of these ideological disruptions presents the opportunity to investigate previously under-explored marketplace dynamics.

In relatively uncontested markets, practices may attain a naturalized, taken-for-granted quality; here, the ideological meanings underlying regularly enacted practices may become obscured by these practices’ seemingly natural character (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006). In such circumstances, marketplace practices can be said to have been decoupled from their concomitant ideology. However, markets ultimately remain open to contestation, and naturalness may be disrupted in a variety of ways. For example, the disruptive introduction of novel practices in a relatively settled field may result in the re-coupling of formerly status quo practices with their long-obscured ideology, and the meanings and interests underlying these practices may again

become the subject of debate. These practices may be seen as illegitimate, particularly if their underlying, newly-recoupled ideology is seen as out-of-step with prevailing social sentiments. While the marketing literature has begun exploring the dynamics of taken-for-granted practice disruption at the individual level (Phipps and Ozanne 2017), we still know little about the market-level dynamics arising from such disruption, including the ways in which market actors may work to protect or dismantle status quo market arrangements.

Understanding this work requires attention to dynamics at the societal, market, and individual level; examining connections between shifting societal-level ideologies and individual-level practices may help elucidate market-level change mechanisms. The extant literature has tended to focus on phenomena at the market level of analysis; thus, the impact of societal-level dynamics, such as the ebb and flow of ideologies that may gain or diminish in prominence over time, has gone largely overlooked. These dynamics are worthy of consideration, as they may provide “ideological opportunities” that can be exploited by firms equipped with resonant ideological offerings (Holt and Cameron 2010, p. 185). However, work exploring these opportunities has focused on their implications for branding strategy; as of yet, we know little about the ways in which societal-level ideological dynamics may inform work aimed at defending or disrupting a market status quo. Because ideologies contain both descriptive and prescriptive elements (Eagleton 2007) – that is, they reflect higher-order beliefs about how the world is and how it should be – these dynamics may help mobilize a range of actors that would have otherwise had little interest in a battle over a given field’s logics, or operating procedures.

I explore this subject through an investigation of the ongoing disruption occurring in the automotive field spurred by the entry of Tesla Motors (“Tesla” hereafter). Tesla’s introduction of

a direct-to-consumer distribution model to a market long dominated by intermediated relationships has served to disrupt the status quo in part by re-coupling taken-for-granted distribution practices with outdated or otherwise dissonant ideological perspectives. Employing the concept of institutional work (Dolbec and Fischer 2015; Lawrence and Suddaby 2006; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013), I examine how actors respond to this disruptive re-coupling of previously obscured ideology with taken-for-granted practices. Per Bourdieu (1977) – as I elaborate on in Chapter Three – such disruption leads actors aligned with status quo arrangements to defend not just their previously legitimate, now threatened practices, but also the newly recoupled ideological meanings underlying those practices, as both come under attack from change agents. Thus, while modes of practice are subject to contestation during this disruption, conflict transcends functional concerns; when previously obscured ideologies are revealed, they may also be drawn on by actors working to ensure arrangements are changed or maintained to reflect certain worldviews. Examining the dynamics arising from this disruption requires attention to multiple levels of analysis, as actors invoke societal-level ideologies to promote or defend certain practices as part of their work in support of or opposition to field-level change.

I proceed in Chapter Two with an overview of the literature on market dynamics, with particular attention to how the subject has been approached from the institutional perspective. As part of this overview, I suggest that market disruption arising from the introduction of novel practices premised on resonant ideologies may catalyze new forms of institutional work unaccounted for in the extant marketing literature. In discussing the role of societal-level ideologies in sparking market disruption, I draw on Wright and Zammuto's (2013) multi-level conceptualization of field change. In this section, I also develop a conceptualization of

distribution systems as ideological enactments, while outlining the ideologies that informed different distribution practices; I contrast this ideological perspective with the functional perspective that underlies extant marketing channels literature.

In Chapter Three, I integrate this multi-level perspective with Bourdieu's (1977) notion of doxa to develop a theoretical lens through which to examine the disruption brought to the automotive field. Doxa refers to sets of beliefs and values that have taken on a self-evident quality and are largely uncontested and unquestioned; in this chapter, I also develop an account of how, over time, distribution systems can become doxic, before concluding the chapter by outlining my research questions.

In Chapter Four, I provide an overview of my research aims, followed by explication of my context and research methodology and methods.

In Chapter Five, I outline my findings. Broadly, I find that ideological market disruption gives rise to novel forms of institutional work, including defensive work aimed at maintaining the status quo. This disruption also spurs a re-distribution of institutional work, as actors are enrolled by change-seeking or change-averse agents and take on new and novel tasks in accordance with their agendas, utilizing ideological resources to attack or defend the status quo. The first form of work I identify is ideological coupling, which entails making rhetorical connections between practices and ideologies as a means of justifying the need for change or the continuance of the status quo. This work is strategic and can also be adversarial, as different market actors endeavor to elevate or denigrate theirs or their opponents' practices by connecting these practices with culturally-resonant or dissonant ideologies. The second form of work I identify is heroizing, which involves rhetorically constructing heroic figures as a means of

promoting or defending against change. These figures act as embodiments of certain ideologies and provide a figurehead around which consumers and other actors mobilize for action. The third form of work I identify is cross-boundary work, which involves consumers engaging in activities traditionally associated with other categories of market actors. I find consumers conducting two different forms of cross-boundary work, each aimed at sustaining ongoing disruption. The first is brand-based activism, which entails protesting, petitioning, and mobilization; the second is professional work, which involves assuming the duties of sales professionals.

In Chapter Six, I provide an overview of my contributions to the literature and the limitations of my research. I also use my findings to develop a model of doxic market disruption. Broadly, I extend theorization around the roles of institutional work and ideology during periods of market disruption, and in doing so, contribute to the market dynamics literature. The three forms of institutional work I identify also extend prior theorization around marketplace moralism and market-based social movements, as consumers engage with brands in novel ways not previously accounted for in the literature. Finally, in developing a conceptualization of distribution channels of ideological enactments, I contribute a novel perspective to a literature that has focused largely on logistical and functional concerns.

Chapter 2

Market System Dynamics

Market system dynamics have been a subject of focus in the marketing literature in recent years, as researchers seek to better understand market creation and change (Giesler and Fischer 2017). Prior work has examined how marketers and consumers endeavor to establish new markets (Humphreys 2010a, 2010b; Giesler 2012; Martin and Schouten 2014) or drive changes to existing arrangements (Ertimur and Coskuner-Balli 2015; Giesler 2008; Dolbec and Fischer 2015; Karababa and Ger 2011; Luedicke 2015; Sandikci and Ger 2010; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007). Throughout, consumers are seen to engage in different field-level activities aimed at addressing unmet needs (Martin and Schouten 2014; Scaraboto and Fischer 2014) and defending the legitimacy of their practices in the face of oppositional market forces (Giesler 2008; Sandikci and Ger 2010; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007). Marketers are seen to engage in legitimacy-seeking projects of their own, as they work to create space for new offerings (Humphreys 2010a), and respond to potentially de-legitimizing narratives put forward by other stakeholders (Giesler 2012). Much of this research draws on institutional or historical perspectives to explore how market arrangements change in different ways; here, analyses are focused on uncovering market change mechanisms arising from individual- or organizational-level practices.

This literature stands in contrast to a stream of change-focused marketing research that draws on Christensen's (1997) notion of disruptive innovation to explore the antecedents and outcomes of the development and deployment of disruptive technological innovations and their impact on markets; focused as it is on the technical and functional aspects of firms and their

environments, this stream largely obscures the institutional dynamics that contribute to market change.

Taken together, this research has added considerably to our understanding of market change. While these streams employ different approaches and are underpinned by different assumptions about the nature of markets, they share a focus on illuminating how markets can be disrupted and changed by practices at the individual or organizational level. However, neither of these literatures has sufficiently accounted for the impact of another level of analysis – the societal level – on market dynamics. Like other fields, markets are subject to broader ideological shifts that occur at the level of society (Holt and Cameron 2010); these shifts transcend specific market contexts, but the ideologies involved filter down to influence field-level organizing principles – or logics – and organizational- and individual-level practices in a variety of fields (Wright and Zammuto 2013; Zilber 2006). However, as I will show, the impact of such shifts on market dynamics remains relatively undertheorized. This impact may be particularly pronounced in markets where practices have, over time, become taken-for-granted and disconnected from their ideological meanings. In such circumstances, the ideology underlying status quo practices may gradually fall out of fashion while practices continue unabated, creating opportunities for new entrants to disrupt the market status quo with more ideologically-resonant offerings. However, the market-level dynamics arising from the disruption of taken-for-granted practices are undertheorized. In such circumstances, market actors may engage in a variety of ideologically-informed work aimed at further disrupting or defending the status quo. I proceed with an overview of the literature on market change, with attention to the levels of analysis under consideration.

2.1 Market Change: The Technical Perspective

Introduced by Bower and Christensen (1996) and later expounded by Christensen (1997), the notion of disruptive innovation gave rise to a field of research that seeks to understand how firms develop innovations with the potential to create new value networks and displace existing products or firms. There remains debate over what constitutes a disruptive innovation (Yu and Hang 2010), and the term has been criticized as inconsistent and under-defined (Danneels 2004). However, Christensen, Raynor, and McDonald (2015) attempt a clarification, describing it as “a process whereby a smaller company with fewer resources is able to successfully challenge established incumbent businesses” (p. 46). Per disruptive innovation theory, this challenge is made possible through the targeting of underserved, less-profitable customer segments with higher-functionality, often lower-cost products and services that may not meet the standards of better-served mainstream segments. Large incumbent firms may overlook this challenge, owing to their pursuit of more-profitable segments; meanwhile, disruptive entrants may move upmarket, gradually improving their offering until it attracts mainstream customers. As this mainstream segment adopts the innovation “in volume” (Christensen, Raynor, and McDonald 2015, p. 46), previously-successful incumbents may be displaced, thus disruptively altering the structure of the market.

In concentrating on the technical and functional characteristics of firms and their innovations (e.g. firm size and resource allocation, product price and performance, segments served), Christensen’s notion of disruptive innovation largely focuses analytical attention at the organizational level. While these innovations have the potential to unsettle existing market arrangements, this literature has focused on identifying factors that enable or inhibit firms’ development of innovations (Yu and Hang 2010), rather than on field-level change mechanisms

themselves. From this perspective, products and services are disruptive as a function of their technical characteristics and the markets they serve. Here, market change occurs largely as an after effect of underserved customers selecting products that offer superior performance or price attributes, these products gradually making their way to more mainstream markets, and incumbent firms being displaced by upstart entrants. This literature thus largely overlooks dynamics occurring at the field and societal level.

2.2 Market Change: The Institutional Perspective

Much of the change-focused marketing literature approaches market dynamics from a sociocultural standpoint; some of this work examines market change from an institutional theory perspective. Broadly, institutional theory is concerned with understanding how social arrangements, practices, and organizations come to be imbued with shared meaning and value that more or less persists over time. Breaking away from a view of these phenomena as primarily functional or technical in nature, institutional perspectives focus on the taken-for-granted social and cultural elements – myths, symbols, beliefs – underlying an institutional environment which “defines and delimits social reality” (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Scott 1987, p. 507). In being shaped according to the beliefs and values of their environments, organizations, arrangements, and practices develop a life of their own apart from their instrumental utility, becoming “receptacles of group idealism” (Selznick 1957, p. 22). These myths and beliefs originate from a variety of sources, all of which may exert complementary or conflicting forces in shaping arrangements, practices, and organizations (Friedland and Alford 1991; Scott 1987). Organizations that uphold the norms of their environment are granted legitimacy, while those

that do not are considered illegitimate; likewise, certain practices may be viewed as legitimate or illegitimate insofar as they adhere to culturally-accepted norms (Suchman 1995).

Owing to the pressure exerted by institutional forces, organizations in a given field tend toward isomorphism – the adoption of similar structures and practices that are seen to grant legitimacy. However, institutional environments are not monolithic – they comprise a variety of “institutional spheres” that “call up different belief systems” (Scott 1987, p. 500). These different spheres place contrasting demands on institutional actors, who may respond in a variety of ways, such as demonstrating symbolic compliance with institutional demands while maintaining existing practices that would be deemed illegitimate (Meyer and Rowan 1977). This effort, known as de-coupling, ultimately serves to disconnect practices from widely-shared cultural beliefs, or ideologies; however, practices and ideologies may also be recoupled, to disruptive effect (Hallett 2010).

While early institutional theory work sought to explain the dynamics of isomorphism, and as such, emphasized the habitual, taken-for-granted nature of knowledge and practices, recent work has also focused on the ways in which actors bring about change through innovation and strategic decision making (Battilana and D’Aunno 2009). Some of this change-centric literature conceptualizes institutions as being nested within societal, field, organizational, and individual levels, and investigates the ways in which organizational action or societal-level shifts may spur field-level changes which in turn enable or constrain organizational practice (Wright and Zammuto 2013). The influence of this later work is apparent in much of the market dynamics literature, which explores how market actors interact with one another and their institutional environments to affect change. These institutional entrepreneurs are dissatisfied with some aspect of a market’s status quo, and as such, seek to legitimize or de-legitimize practices or

institutions to better reflect their interests (Humphreys 2010a; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013). Importantly, these activities may or may not result in the change initially sought (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013). In examining the relationship between individual- or organizational-level practices and field-level dynamics, this line of research has identified different mechanisms that contribute to market change.

Humphreys (2010a; 2010b) explores how new markets are created via the process of legitimation, whereby previously-undesirable practices are rendered socially acceptable. Over time, the practice of casino gambling was legitimized via by specific rhetorical frames that made the practice more palatable to both regulators and the general public. Mobilized in different ways, the major frames present in this study – crime, business, regulation, and social issues – are reflective of broader ideologies. In this way, the role of these broader ideologies in informing organizational practice and catalyzing field-level change is theorized implicitly. However, owing to the focus of this work – and in line with other work in this tradition – the societal-level dynamics of ideology are not explicitly theorized, and as such, it does not account for the role of societal-level ideological shifts in informing practice-level and field-level dynamics.

Elsewhere, Humphreys and Thompson (2014) examine how mythic narratives – embodied in brands – help perpetuate status quo consumption practices in the face of disaster events. In their formulation, mythologies articulated in popular culture render certain practices and arrangements seemingly natural and therefore beyond discussion. When this naturalness is threatened by a disaster event, institutional actors work to preserve consumers’ naturalized perceptions of risk and maintain trust in expert systems through cultural branding practices. By creating a culturally-resonant myth around the disaster event, these actors “ideologically contain” its potentially disruptive implications – blame is shifted to specific brands, systemic critiques are

deflected, and status quo consumption practices continue unabated (Humphreys and Thompson 2014, p. 880). In this way, ideology underlying the status quo may once again go dormant and forgotten, with practices once again becoming taken-for-granted. While ideology is a central component of this work, it is not conceptualized as being subject to societal-level shifts, as such dynamics are not the focus of interest.

Press, Arnould, Murray, and Strand (2014) explore the role of naturalized practices and arrangements in their examination of how conflicting ideological perspectives prevent managers from changing their strategic orientation, despite economic incentives to do so. In viewing these orientations as inherently ideological projects, the authors illustrate how farmers with differing orientations – chemical or organic production – come into dramatic conflict with each other’s ideological positions. While these seemingly-divergent groups may duel over practical norms and rules, they draw from a shared set of taken-for-granted beliefs and values to legitimize their practices. However, this work does not theorize the role of the societal level of analysis, and thus does not account for how ideological dynamics at this level may impact the field and practice levels.

Ertimur and Coskuner-Balli (2015) demonstrate how yoga brands navigate the conflicting demands wrought by plural logics of spirituality, fitness, medicine, and commerce through the coupling of logics at the field and societal level. In so doing, they contribute to our understanding of market evolution; here, plural logics are generated and sustained through actors’ changing accumulation of cultural capital, as well as their legitimation efforts. The societal level of analysis is explicitly theorized, as clashes between field- and societal-level logics lead to a changed emphasis on certain field-level logics. However, while this work illuminates the field-level impacts of clashes between plural logics – including those existing at the societal level – it

does not consider how shifts in societal-level ideologies may impact field- and practice-level phenomena.

Scaraboto and Fischer (2013) examine how marginalized groups of consumers engage in institutional work – defined as “intelligent, situated institutional action” intended to create, maintain, or disrupt a field’s structures, practices, and rules (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006, p. 219) – to seek greater inclusion in a market. Here, consumer mobilization is aided through the identification of inspiring institutional entrepreneurs within the field, as well as the leveraging of adjacent field logics that provide support for entrepreneurs’ claims. Marginalized consumers are also shown to seek change through allying with more powerful institutional actors. Dolbec and Fischer (2015) also employ the concept of institutional work to provide an account of how interconnected – but not dissatisfied – consumers may inadvertently affect change through sharing their tastes and opinions with one another. The authors show how enthusiastic consumers support the field of fashion through the adoption of work previously done by paid actors, as well as the introduction of new forms of work supportive of the field. Here again, the societal level of analysis is not explicitly theorized.

Each of these studies adopts an institutional approach to understanding market change and focuses on elucidating the relationships between individual- or organizational-level practice and field-level dynamics. However, the societal level of analysis – and the dynamics of societal-level ideologies – are relatively undertheorized. Ideologies are accounted for in some form in almost all of this work; however, they are typically conceptualized as resources to be drawn on, without further consideration for how ideological prominence may ebb and flow at the societal level, or how such shifts may impact the field level. Thus, the marketing literature has not yet accounted for how these societal-level dynamics may drive individual- or organizational-level

action aimed at changing field-level structures. To help elucidate my research aims, I now turn to further development of the concept of ideology, its role in the extant marketing literature, and its place in a multi-level analysis of market dynamics.

2.3 Societal Ideology and Multi-level Dynamics

Throughout the marketing literature, actors skillfully draw on a variety of complementary and conflicting ideologies to navigate complex institutional environments, inform their practices, pursue their interests, and affect change. In this literature, ideology has been variously conceived of as a resource drawn on by actors involved in contentious market creation and change projects (Giesler 2008; Giesler 2012; Giesler and Veresiu 2014; Sandikci and Ger 2010; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007), as a foundation for strategic orientations which enable or prevent the adoption of certain practices (Press et al. 2014), as viewpoints competing for affiliation among opposing consumer groups (Luedicke, Thompson, and Giesler 2010; Mikkonen, Vicdan, and Markkula 2014), and as the narrative basis of consumer identity building (Kozinets 2008). Of these conceptualizations, those focusing on ideology's role in market change processes and practice enabling are most relevant to my research. In this work, ideological differences can serve as a source of tension, as marketplace actors work to reconcile issues of ownership (Giesler 2008), trust (Humphreys and Thompson 2014), responsibility (Giesler and Veresiu 2014), leisure (Karababa and Ger 2011), and religiosity (Izberk-Bilgin 2012) brought to the fore during disruptive periods. Throughout, dueling ideologies are seen to guide decision making and practices at both the organizational and individual level.

While ideology is a broadly-defined construct at times employed interchangeably with field logics (Meyer, Sahlin, Ventresca, and Walgenbach 2009), Wright and Zammuto (2013) provide a useful point of differentiation. They examine ideologies and logics as existing at different levels of analysis, conceptualizing ideologies as societal-level sets of values, beliefs and assumptions, which, through discursive activity, may be drawn down to the field level as logics – organizing principles germane to a given context. Ideologies may thus be seen as broadly-applicable worldviews that can be used to inform the organizing principles of a given field. Individual practices, in turn, influence and are influenced by societal-level ideologies and field-level logics. Thus, while ideologies may inform the specific logics of a given field and impact individual behaviour, they also have a boundary-spanning “life of their own” (Delmestri 2009, p. 118), allowing them to be drawn on in different ways by different actors in disparate fields. My work employs this conceptualization of ideologies as boundary-spanning beliefs and values that serve to guide behavior and may function to guide strategic practices at the firm level (Press et al. 2014). Because ideologies consist of “action-oriented sets of beliefs” (Eagleton 2007, p. 47) that function to motivate actors to work for “the preservation or reconstruction of a given social order” (p. 48), attention to their dynamics at the societal level may yield insights into market change mechanisms that could not be gleaned from focusing on a field’s organizing principles.

2.3.1 Ideology and Routine Practices

From an institutional perspective, ideologies can become embedded in fields (Friedland and Alford 1991), where they can contribute to a taken-for-granted, “shared definition of social reality” that defines “the ‘way things are’ and/or the ‘way things are to be done’” (Scott 1987, p.

496). This shared understanding tends to engender “conformity rooted in the taken-for-granted aspects of everyday life” (Zucker 1983, p.5). Thus, institutions are both enacted and supported by the practical action they inform. Repeated over time, practices develop into taken-for-granted routines and rituals, contributing to institutional reproduction and maintenance (Angus 1993; Dacin, Munir, and Tracey 2010; Lawrence and Suddaby 2006; Zilber 2002). Thus, individual-level routines are key to the continuation – or lack thereof – of field-level arrangements. Through repetition, routine practices can attain a natural, taken-for-granted character, becoming a relatively seamless part of individuals’ lives. For example, many consumers reflexively engage in tightly-scripted morning routines that vary little from day to day – they may awaken to an alarm, shuffle out of bed, and set their coffee to brew before showering, getting dressed, eating breakfast, and brushing their teeth. Purchase behaviours can also take on a routine character, as when consumers regularly purchase a given assortment of goods from the grocery store, or engage in banter with a well-known clerk who bags their items. Even more involved, less routine consumer practices, such as purchasing a new automobile, are comprised of a variety of smaller, generally taken-for-granted routine practices: visiting a dealership, browsing a selection of available vehicles, gleaning information from a salesperson, and haggling over price and add-on features all comprise commonly-recognized parts of the vehicle-buying experience. In this way, even consumers who have little or no individual experience may draw on taken-for-granted practices that have become well-established in a market.

Owing to their taken-for-granted, embedded nature, these routines can obscure the ideologies underlying them, allowing practices “to be ritually reproduced long after the original purpose or intent had been forgotten” (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006, p. 234). Practices may initially be informed by certain ideologies that become invisible in day-to-day routine enactment,

and which may eventually become lost to time. Thus, these practices and their concomitant ideologies can be said to have become de-coupled from one another. Over time, institutionalized arrangements and associated practices may become so entrenched – in the routines of individual behaviour, in the relational structure among field actors, in formal regulations governing conduct – they outlive the cultural prominence of the ideology that informed their development in the first place. As Wright and Zammuto (2013) illustrate, the societal-level ideologies from which institutional arrangements derive authority and legitimacy are subject to change; while the English county cricket system in their study was originally structured according to an ideology of class-based hierarchy, societal movement toward egalitarianism resulted in pressure to change at the field and practice levels. Here, ideological shifts at the societal level contributed to gradual change at the field and practice levels, as existing routine practices no longer aligned with societal expectations, having outlived the prominence of the societal-level hierarchical ideology underlying them.

In the marketplace, routine practices may be disrupted by the introduction of new products, services, or policies at the field level. A grocery store chain may elect to go bagless, compelling customers to bring their own bags during shopping trips. Or it may decide to replace well-known clerks with automated checkout stations. Adoption of new practices can also have disruptive impacts beyond consumers' individual lives; entire markets can be thrown into flux as a result of changing practices. Owing to institutions' reliance on continual reenactment through routine practice, the disruption of routines may contribute to broader institutional disruption. Just as the disruption of status quo practices in Phipps and Ozanne (2017) provided a space for consumers to reflect upon the dormant meaning underlying their individual practices, so may institutional disruption serve as a catalyst for reflection and critique of the ideology underlying

institutionalized consumer practices and market arrangements. In some circumstances, this ideology will have become dormant, forgotten, and potentially out of step with modern sensibilities; when it is revealed by a disruptive force through a recoupling to its concomitant practices, the legitimacy of those previously taken-for-granted practices may be called into question. If this revelation stems not from a natural disaster but from a new market entrant whose practices are informed by a culturally resonant, contrasting ideology, it may spark broader disruption through its provision of novel templates for action. In such an event, the field-level forces that served to lend legitimacy to the previously taken-for-granted practices and arrangements – public opinion, laws, regulatory structures – may once again be enrolled in support of, or opposition to, the legitimacy-seeking project of the new entrant. In this way, a variety of actors become actively engaged in institutional work aimed at maintaining or disrupting the field.

Throughout the marketing literature, consumers, marketers, and other actors draw on different ideologies and logics to inform their practices. Contention between differently-interested actors working for or against change is often reflected in contending ideological perspectives. In Giesler's (2008) examination of filesharing in the music industry, consumers and producers draw on ideologies of individualism and utilitarianism to inform their individual-level practices, contributing to field-level change through their dramatic marketplace performances. These performances, driven by dueling ideologies, shape the music marketplace, which in turn shapes the possibilities for action available at the individual level. Here, the cultural creative sphere is conceptualized as being historically subject to a tension between countervailing ideologies, with neither becoming firmly entrenched. Likewise, the transgressive practices of consumers and marketers in Karababa and Ger (2010) serve to challenge traditional religious and

state authorities; here, ideological discourses of leisurely pleasure and Sufi Islam clash with those of Orthodox Islam. Over time, negotiations between these discourses – and those of a fourth discourse, health – shape consumer and marketer practices, leading to the development of a coffeehouse culture and the emergence of a more self-determined consumer subject.

Ideological tension is also central to marketplace change in Giesler's (2012) analysis of brand contestations arising in the cosmetic self-enhancement industry; here, technophilic and technophobic ideologies are reflected in the struggle between brand images promoted by innovators and doppelgänger images promoted by other stakeholders. Elsewhere, Sandikci and Ger (2010) explore how Islamist and neoliberal ideologies contribute to the acceptance and routinization of a once stigmatized consumer practice – veiling among Turkish women – through processes of personalization and aestheticization.

While this literature has contributed greatly to our understanding of the role of ideology in driving market change, fields explored in this work tend to be subject to “enduring tension” between various ideologies (Giesler 2008, p. 739) – this ongoing contestation prevents any one ideology from becoming entrenched and more fully taken-for-granted, thus providing readily available ideological resources for actors to use for their own purposes. In these studies, social actors are able to playfully work with these ideologies in attempting to shape marketplace dynamics according to their own interest. In such circumstances, ideological debate and contestation keeps ideologies and their ensuing practices relatively tightly coupled. However, with this focus on the playful usage of ideologies in fields with long-standing tensions, the market change literature largely overlooks the taken-for-granted naturalness that occurs when a dominant ideology and corresponding practices become decoupled from one another. In other words, an ideology that served to shape day-to-day practices may become obscured and

forgotten, perhaps even outmoded, as its concomitant, day-to-day practices come to be taken-for-granted as the natural order. Thus, the literature has not yet accounted for how the disruption of these practices – and subsequent ideological re-coupling – may impact field-level dynamics. Such disruption may serve to facilitate “new ways of acting that replace existing templates” (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006, p. 237), or novel forms of institutional work.

While the marketing literature has examined the institutional work conducted by market actors in different contexts (Dolbec and Fischer 2015; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013), there exist several types of institutional maintenance and disruption work that have, as yet, gone unexamined. Further, the institutional maintenance outlined by Dolbec and Fischer (2015) arises as an incidental effect of passionate, contented consumers sharing information – here, consumers’ work helps contribute to the field’s continuation, but their work is not conducted in the face of potential disruption, and they are not fighting to maintain status quo arrangements. Hence, we still know relatively little about how institutional maintenance work in the marketplace may arise as a purposive strategy in response to disruption, or how actors may contribute to “processes of persistence and stability in the context of upheaval and change” (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006, p. 234).

2.3.2 Ideological Disruption

In viewing taken-for-granted market arrangements and routine practices, as well as firms’ strategic orientations, as ideological in nature (Humphreys and Thompson 2014; Press et al. 2014), an opportunity for novel institutional work dynamics arises. If a new market entrant’s ideologically-driven orientation and associated practices conflict with the ideologies underlying

naturalized market arrangements and routine practices, this may spark disruption in a way not yet examined, facilitating novel forms of institutional work. Owing to the intentional, strategic nature of a new market introduction and the contentious, interest-bound nature of market arrangements (King and Pearce 2010), such disruption may spur reflection and critique beyond the kind demonstrated in Phipps and Ozanne (2017), where the meaning underlying individual practices was rendered open for reflection. The introduction of novel practices by a market actor demonstrates the real possibility of alternative market arrangements and provides new templates for action; it simultaneously shatters any natural, taken-for-granted character existing arrangements may have attained, and reveals the interested, constructed nature of these arrangements and practices. In demonstrating the possibility of alternative sets of practices and disrupting existing routines, this market entrance opens a discursive space to critique not just the individual meaning behind practices, but the broader ideology and interests underlying the institutional arrangements those practices helped support. This entrance may be especially disruptive when the ideology driving the market entrant's practices is culturally ascendant and the ideology underlying existing arrangements has diminished in relevance, as was the case in Wright and Zammuto (2013), where the hierarchical ideology that had informed early institutional development of cricket was gradually displaced by an egalitarian ideology. However, changes in this field were relatively gradual, rather than disruptive, and were not driven by the arrival of a new entrant.

When a new market entrant's ideologically-driven practices clash with the obscured ideology underlying existing arrangements, market naturalness is disturbed not by a disaster event or debacle, but by a strategic ideological challenge. This dynamic can currently be seen at work in a variety of fields, including transportation and tourism, where new entrants like AirBnB

and Uber are challenging established, intermediated distribution channel arrangements. In connecting consumers directly to one another, these companies bypass traditional gatekeepers – taxi commissions, tourism associations – and their associated policy and regulatory frameworks that have been subject to state sanction. Common to these entrants is an ideological perspective that disdains hierarchical relationships and established expertise – traits shared with populist ideologies that have seen a resurgence in recent years (Bröning 2016) – and champions technology as a means of personal empowerment and liberation. In these fields, naturalized understandings and practices surrounding the structure of distribution channels are being disrupted, resulting in legal challenges, redressive competitive maneuvers, and the adoption of new consumer practices. As existing market arrangements and consumers’ taken-for-granted practices are disrupted, so too is the previously-dormant ideology underlying those distribution arrangements and practices. In this way, shifting societal-level ideologies – enacted in practices – may be drawn to a field by a new market entrant, where they impact dynamics at the organizational and individual levels. I propose this introduction may serve as a mobilizing force, spurring a range of interested actors to engage in institutional work aimed at halting or continuing disruption. Specifically, I explore how marketers’ disruption of practices and leveraging of societal-level ideologies serves to enroll a range of stakeholders in work aimed at bringing about or preventing field-level change. My research deepens our understanding of the institutional work done by actors to counter or maintain status quo market arrangements in the wake of disruption, and examines how these efforts may interact with one another.

As part of my analysis, I examine how distribution systems in the U.S. came to be inscribed with certain ideologies through the mid-20th century, and how, in contexts where practices went largely unchallenged for decades, societal-level ideological shifts created

opportunities for market disruption. I proceed with an overview of this ideological conceptualization of distribution channels.

2.4 Distribution Systems as Ideological Enactments

As with broader strategic orientations (Press et al. 2014), modes of channel distribution may be seen as enactments of certain ideologies, rather than simply logistical conduits variously arranged to achieve measurable outcomes. To date, research on distribution channels has tended to focus on the identification and development of channel structures that optimize various measurable outcomes, and literature in recent years has maintained a focus on the technical management of channel relationships (Geyskens, Steenkamp, and Kumar 1999). Given this focus on functional attributes, the embedded ideologies underlying channel arrangements have gone largely unexamined in modern channels literature.

Owing to its origins in marketing's functional school of thought, much of the early academic work on distribution channels sought to identify and classify various functions required to move goods from producers to consumers. The role of intermediaries was key to this conversation, with scholars seeking to explicate the functions performed by these actors. Shaw's (1912) efforts to describe these functions is regarded as one of the earliest and most important works in what was then the budding field of academic marketing (Bartels 1988; Sheth, Gardner and Garrett 1988), and over the next two decades several other authors would create lists of their own (Shaw and Jones 2005), each seeking to organize accumulated distribution knowledge into a useable and practical form. Researchers simultaneously sought to better understand the intermediaries themselves, beginning with definitions and classification schemes (Clark 1922;

Weld 1916) before moving to an analysis of the behavioural (Beier and Stern 1969; Stern and Reve 1980) and economic (Bucklin 1965) dimensions of distribution channels. Growing out of this channel-focused work, recent literature on distribution tends to focus on relationships within and between channels, largely examining the ways which various antecedents – trust, commitment, power, dependence – impact satisfaction (Geyskens, Steenkamp, and Kumar 1999). Common to these streams of research is the identification and development of channel structures intended to optimize various measurable outcomes. This focus on efficiency was explicit in early work on distribution that sought to determine “the most economical routes through which the goods may be transferred from producers to consumer” (Nystrom 1915, p. 11) and create a “more efficient marketing system” (Beckman 1927 as cited in Shaw and Jones 2005). Here again intermediaries were at the fore, as their presence was seen to bring efficiency gains to a marketplace (Alderson 1965).

More broadly, Alderson (1965) situates the evolution of intermediated market distribution systems within the context of a larger industrialization project ongoing since the Middle Ages. With the increasing specialization of individual skillsets came an increased need for exchange, and the surplus created by individual households was transformed into “social surplus” as household economies were integrated “into a larger system of specialized production and exchange” (p. 39). As both skill specialization and production scale increased, the gap between producers and consumers widened, creating a need for intermediaries to intervene and perform the various functions that would become the focus of early marketing scholarship. However, the problem of surplus supply and marketing intermediaries’ role in addressing it is not simply functional in nature. Rather, it is intertwined with notions of freedom, growth, progress and prosperity – all key parts of the ideological project of free market capitalism. Mazur

(1964) suggests marketers are “charged with a truly great responsibility” for ensuring the continued welfare of “a nation of surpluses” (p. 350) – the United States – and warns that a failure to adequately manage this task could cause economic recession and expansion of the welfare state, potentially resulting in the destruction of the country’s democratic institutions.

While this scenario may be a dramatic reflection of Cold War tensions, Mazur’s (1964) suggestion of hierarchical distribution systems as integral cogs in the capitalist machine are shared elsewhere. Alderson (1965) suggests intermediaries help provide consumers with goods that represent a “tangible manifestation of progress”, and that households’ desire to continually expand keeps “the whole system running” (p. 40). In helping ensure supply – excess or otherwise – reaches consumers, intermediaries are thus seen to be contributing to broader capitalist goals of continual growth, inevitable progress, and concomitant prosperity. In being viewed as vital contributors to the capitalist project, intermediaries became infused with ideological importance beyond their economic utility. In some markets, this importance was formalized, as regulators enacted laws to enshrine intermediaries’ positions and functions in channel systems. Far from being value free, these laws were enacted to protect certain values – those holding up intermediaries as integral cogs. In this way, societal-level ideologies that were prominent during a specific time period were brought down to the field level as logics of intermediation. Thus, certain distribution models – and the ideological beliefs underlying them – became institutionalized, their arrangements naturalized and taken-for-granted, over time.

In contrast to the view of intermediaries as a largely positive force performing a vital function, another perspective holds that intermediaries are not only inefficient or unnecessary, but inherently corrupt, even anti-democratic. Rather than focusing on technical questions of efficiency, this discourse portrays intermediaries as artifacts of elitist, hierarchical systems that

prevent authentic, direct connections between actors. Here, direct connections are seen as desirable because they allow for the unfettered, uncorrupted flow of information among individuals, a flow which is seen as integral to a broader techno-utopian project aimed at self-determination (Turner 2006). Hence, any separation created by intermediaries may be construed as a subversion of the freedom to communicate. This ideological perspective is reflected in the ethos and actions of many modern Silicon Valley firms (Barbrook and Cameron 1995; Turner 2006), who have blended it with other ideologies, including a resurgent populism (Bröning 2016). If these culturally-resonant ideologies were embodied in the practices of a new market entrant and brought to a field with institutionalized intermediated arrangements, it may act as a disruptive force. This disruption can best be understood by examining dynamics at multiple levels of analysis. Because societal-level ideologies may spur change at the field level through individual- or organizational-level practices, developments at each of these levels must be considered.

To understand market dynamics arising from the disruption of previously taken-for-granted practices, I require a theoretical lens attuned to mechanisms of naturalization and denaturalization. To that end, I integrate a multi-level approach to field change with Pierre Bourdieu's notion of doxa, which I will now outline.

Chapter 3

Disruption and Doxa

I employ Bourdieu's (1977) concept of doxa to explore how the revealing of dormant ideologies inscribed in taken-for-granted practices may serve to disrupt markets. Doxa refers to sets of historically-constructed beliefs, values, and meanings that have taken on a natural, self-evident quality, are largely uncontested and unquestioned, and tend to self-perpetuate. In this uncontested doxic state, the constructed nature of systems is obscured, as are, by extension, the actors and interests that contributed to their creation and continue to ensure their maintenance. The organic and chemical farmer groups of Press et al. (2014), while approaching their trade from divergent ideological perspectives, are shown to share a common doxa from which they draw to frame individual practices. Doxa have also been shown at work in professional fields such as advertising (Drumwright and Kamal 2016) and journalism (Schultz 2007), as well as in national political and socioeconomic systems, such as the former Soviet Union (Herrera 2005).

The ability of doxa to self-perpetuate as seemingly natural systems is closely tied to the reinforcement provided by individual practices (Bourdieu 1977). When there exists a quasi-perfect fit between individual experience and the interpretations facilitated by doxa, the doxa appears as a natural state – because new experiences are consistent with previously internalized categories and systems, these categories and systems appear as natural, and their constructed nature is obscured (Herrera 2005). The naturalness of doxic systems is also facilitated through their ability to limit individuals' perceptions of what is possible – when doxa become internalized, the perceived range of potential action available to individuals is limited to those that fit within the doxic system. Because it becomes difficult to imagine practices that fall outside this range, future possibilities are framed in terms of previously internalized

understandings. When subsequent repeated practices operate within this “sense of limits” (Bourdieu 1977, p. 164), the naturalness of the doxa is reaffirmed.

But like all social constructions, doxic systems are ultimately open to contestation – though they may take on a natural appearance, absolute naturalness exists only as a goal (Herrera 2005). Doxic systems may become disrupted through crises such as natural disasters (Humphreys and Thompson 2014) or through internal turmoil, such as the entry of a new agent to the field (Swartz 1997). During periods of doxic disruption, systems’ naturalness is called into question, their arbitrary nature exposed, and the interests underlying them rendered transparent. Under such circumstances, some actors work to defend “orthodoxy” and “restore the silence of the doxa”, that is, return it to a state of relative naturalness, while other actors promote “heterodoxy” by attempting to further subvert existing understandings (Bourdieu 1991, p. 131). However, the very act of defending the doxa necessarily implies its arbitrariness, for if it were truly a natural state beyond questioning, no defense would be required (Herrera 2005). In reinforcing the constructed nature of existed arrangements, this orthodox defense may serve to further exacerbate the struggle against forces of heterodoxy. For their part, heterodox forces aim to promote a “heretical subversion” that serves to counterpose “a paradoxical pre-vision, a utopia, a project or programme, to the ordinary vision which apprehends the social world as a natural world” (Bourdieu 1991, p. 128). That is, heterodoxy functions as the promotion of alternative sets of practices or arrangements that further undermine the supposed naturalness of a previously-settled field.

The struggle between orthodoxy and heterodoxy is thus a clash between worldviews competing for legitimacy and dominance. This clash goes beyond a challenge to the rules, boundaries, and roles germane to a specific context. While a struggle over organizing principles

may indeed result, doxic disruption creates contestation at a level more fundamental than that of field logics – challenges occur between ideologies that supercede specific contexts and travel across boundaries. During such struggles, actors offer competing ideal visions for what the world is and should be. Owing to the ability of ideology to traverse fields and span boundaries (Delmestri 2009), the arrival of a new ideology – enacted in a new entrant’s novel set of practices – to a given field may serve as a disruptive force. This arrival may break the fit between individual practice and doxic interpretations, providing actors with new templates for action and laying bare the arbitrary nature of previously taken-for-granted practices. In the process, existing discourses are challenged and previously internalized limits are questioned. Thus, the entry of a new agent with a set of ideologically-driven practices may disrupt existing arrangements when those practices conflict with dominant modes of acting in a given field. This doxic disruption, in turn, opens a space for discourse – whether orthodox or heterodox – to take place. The boundary between a doxic state and this space where new discourse can occur thus represents a “dividing-line between the most radical form of misrecognition and the awakening of political consciousness” (Bourdieu 1977, p. 170). When existing practices are no longer taken-for-granted and misrecognized as natural, new discursive space is opened, creating the potential for different conflict between actors.

While Bourdieu’s notion of doxa is somewhat reminiscent of the Marxist concept of false consciousness, the two perspectives have different views of the nature and objectives of change agents. Doxic systems are social constructions premised on certain beliefs and built to accommodate certain interests – in line with a Marxist view of capitalist production – and disruption of these systems may bring taken-for-granted beliefs and interests to the fore. However, while a variety of social actors may be involved in the construction and gradual

naturalization of doxic systems, these actors are not necessarily working to maintain their position through the exploitation of lower-status actors, as with Marx's bourgeoisie. In the doxic view, actors may simply be navigating a field in pursuit of their own interests, while, over time, their practices and the ideology underlying those practices become naturalized. Subsequently, this system may appear as natural and beyond question, obscuring the possibility of other modes of practice. Further, Marxist perspectives focus on disruptive change as driven by the consumer class revolting against capital-holding market forces. By contrast, a wide range of actors, including marketers, may drive doxic disruption through their pursuit of divergent ideological goals. This distinction is particularly important, given my focus on disruption initiated by market entry.

Bourdieu's framework, with its focus on interested actors competing to restore naturalness or expose arbitrariness, provides a novel way of conceptualizing market structuring and change. Like other arrangements, market systems may be viewed as possessing doxic qualities, having been historically structured in alignment with particular ideologies. It follows that when this ideological doxa is disrupted, actors working in the interest of orthodoxy and heterodoxy will compete to impose their respective worldviews, mobilizing others and potentially altering the structure of the market in the process. Such a conflict occurs at multiple levels, as actors invoke societal-level ideologies to legitimate their individual- and organizational-level practices and contribute to field-level changes.

3.1 Doxa and the Multi-level Perspective

Combining Bourdieu's notion of doxa with a multi-level perspective of market change helps illuminate how a variety of actors work to contribute to field change when previously naturalized understandings are disrupted. From this perspective, fields function as a middle ground between an overarching societal level and the organizational and individual levels where human action occurs (Friedland and Alford 1991). Boundary-spanning ideologies operating at the societal level may be drawn down to the field level to inform logics, and may also be drawn on to directly inform individual and organizational action (Wright and Zammuto 2013). Being attuned to the importance of societal-level ideological influence at the field level, as well as at the level of organizational and individual action, is particularly important given my interest in exploring actors' responses to doxic disruption.

A multi-level perspective of societal-level ideologies as contributing to field-level change through their influence on behaviours at the organizational and individual levels also allows for the consideration of a range of change agents fulfilling a variety of roles. Because ideologies transcend field-specific rules and norms and speak to higher-order beliefs about how the world should operate, this disruption may serve to mobilize a range of actors that would have otherwise had little interest or stake in a narrower battle over a field's operating procedures. Thus, the introduction of a new ideology to a marketplace may provide a novel framework from which various actors draw to inform their practices and become involved in an ideological battle over the future of a field. This mobilization may be expanded if the ideology being introduced is ascendant at a broader social level. From a cultural branding perspective (Holt 2004; Holt and Cameron 2010), brands succeed when their cultural expressions address tensions between societal-level ideologies and individual lived experiences. If the ideology introduced to a field aligns with broader ideological trends at a societal level, and is embodied by a brand with

culturally resonant positioning, it may serve to draw impassioned involvement from a broad range of actors.

With my research, I develop an account of the market dynamics arising from the disruption of taken-for-granted practices by a new market entrant. What defensive and disruptive institutional work do market actors perform in the wake of this disruption? And what is the role of societal-level ideological dynamics in informing this work?

To explore the institutional work dynamics arising from doxic market disruption, I examine the field of automobile distribution, where the dominant, institutionalized, hierarchical mode has been challenged by a new market entrant, Tesla. Eschewing the established mode of intermediated, franchise-based distribution, Tesla supplies its vehicles directly to consumers. In so doing, it has introduced a novel set of practices whose underlying ideology conflicts with the ideology underlying previously taken-for-granted practices and arrangements. This disruption has helped mobilize a variety of actors in opposition to, and support of, Tesla's challenge. This field, with its longstanding, relatively uncontested arrangements, provides an ideal context in which to investigate the disruption occurring when an ideologically-divergent new market entrant introduces a new set of practices. I proceed by providing an overview of this context and an elaboration of the methods used to investigate my research questions.

Chapter 4

Methodology

Given my focus on multi-level dynamics, I adopt a methodology intended to grant insight into the development of institutional work aimed at promoting or preventing field-level change, including the ways in which this work is informed by societal-level ideologies. The goal of this approach is to develop an understanding of how different actors work to contest market arrangements following the disruptive re-coupling of ideology and practice. With this analysis, I develop a deep, contextual understanding of the auto market and insight into the institutional work dynamics in this context.

4.1 The Context of Automobile Distribution

The U.S. automotive market – and particularly the field of automobile distribution – represents an ideal context in which to address my research questions. Practices in the field have remained relatively static since the mid-20th century, and this continuity has resulted in the formation of a doxic market, where practices had become more or less taken for granted. However, the arrival of a new market entrant began upsetting this longstanding stability in the late 2000s. I proceed with an overview of the historical development of this context, before discussing further how events have rendered it ideal for my research purposes.

4.1.1 The Development of a Doxic Market

The practice of selling automobiles via franchised dealerships may be traced to several predicaments facing auto manufacturers in the early 20th century. Owing to the relative novelty and lack of reliability of early automobiles, consumers, while enticed by the prospects of owning one, had reservations about making a purchase; this necessitated the creation of a space for testing and demonstrating the product's features (Hewitt 1956). In addition, the complexity of the product and its limited durability created a need for repair facilities, which manufacturers were expected to provide. At the same time, high demand for the products, combined with the technological challenges of production, kept manufacturers' focus squarely on production-related issues; hence, the need for an intermediary agent responsible for providing the product to end consumers became apparent (Hewitt 1956). Dealerships proliferated from 1900-1920, and their importance further increased in the 1920s, as demand growth for automobiles levelled off and greater emphasis was placed on hard selling a product that previously required only a soft selling approach (Marx 1985). Here, the importance of intermediaries was rooted in the need for knowledgeable experts to assist relatively naïve consumers with sales and service of a complex, expensive product. More generally, intermediaries in various market contexts became charged with drumming up demand for excess supply and helping keep "the whole system running" (Alderson 1965, p. 40). During this time, production levels became a point of contention between manufacturers – who needed to maintain high levels to ensure maximum efficiency – and dealers, who were wary of being saddled with more inventory than they could profitably sell. This and other disagreements led to a series of legal battles between manufacturers and dealers at both the national and state level that would prompt intervention from various levels of government and further cement the place of intermediaries in the auto distribution system.

While the current practice of distributing automobiles in the U.S. is, on the surface, largely uniform across the country – manufacturers sell vehicles to independent franchised dealers, who in turn provide sales and services to end consumers – it actually comprises a variety of state-level arrangements enshrined in law. The specifics of each state’s regulatory framework differ, but each contains provisions pertaining to the role of intermediaries – franchised dealerships – in the system. Beginning with Wisconsin in 1937, state legislatures began intervening in these markets, passing regulation governing the relationship between manufacturers and dealers; by 2002, all 50 states had enacted such laws (Crane 2016). These laws contain a variety of provisions intended to protect dealerships from mistreatment by manufacturers and ostensibly ensure fair competition, including prohibitions on manufacturers bypassing existing dealer networks and selling their product directly to customers. Preceding the development of the protected franchise system, auto dealers had worked to convince governments that their products were vital to the growth of the national economy; in 1917, a group of 30 dealers successfully lobbied the U.S. Congress to prevent auto manufacturing facilities from being converted to defense factories during the First World War (Genat 2004). Later that year, these dealers and 100 others went on to found the National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA), an organization that continues to lobby governments on behalf of dealers to this day. Undergirding government involvement in this marketplace was an assumption that these intermediaries were integral players in a larger industrial development project, performing a vital service both for consumers – education and ongoing service – and for society as a whole, helping to support the continued growth and development of the nation’s economy through its hard selling of surplus inventory that represented tangible progress (Alderson 1965). Owing to this seemingly vital role, state actors intervened in the market with the goal of protecting auto

dealers through the enactment of supportive legislation. The automobile industry as it is known today is largely a product of this interventionist ideological perspective.

Practically, these laws have helped ensure the process of buying and selling vehicles is more or less uniform across the U.S. Regardless of where consumers live, the purchase process has remained largely the same: visit one or more dealerships, browse available vehicles, gather decision-relevant information from salespeople, and engage in negotiation with salespeople over price, features, financing, and other particulars. Thus, the U.S. automobile distribution system represents a set of doxic arrangements entrenched in law, norm, and routine practice. Owing to this relatively settled state of arrangements, automobile distribution practices have remained largely unchanged for nearly a century; over time, these practices have become more or less taken-for-granted and de-coupled from their underlying ideology.

4.1.2 Market Entry and Disruption

Recent developments have made the context of automobile distribution an ideal site for examining the dynamics of doxic disruption. In 2006, California-based Tesla entered the automobile market and began offering its electric vehicles for sale directly to consumers. This entry sparked backlash from a variety of actors, including incumbent manufacturers and automobile dealer associations, who launched legal challenges intended to halt Tesla's operations, claiming that direct distribution violated state law. These counter maneuvers inspired action of their own, not only from Tesla, which had been forced to defend itself, but from consumers, advocates, and regulators who entered the fray in support of, or opposition to, Tesla's operations. The company became embroiled in legal challenges in several states; some, such as

Michigan and Utah, essentially barred the company from conducting business, while others, such as Massachusetts, allowed the company to proceed with its direct-sale operations largely unabated.

In 2017, the company was re-named Tesla, Inc., reflecting its expanded focus on products other than automobiles, including solar panels and lithium-ion batteries. Common to all of these product streams is an underlying belief in the ability of technology to help humanity progress toward an idealized, self-determined future; this perspective is reflected in Tesla CEO Elon Musk's driving interest in "things that change the world or that affect the future and wondrous, new technology" (Pelley 2014). The notion of technology empowering individuals to free themselves from the yoke of corrupt, unaccountable systems forms part of a broader technoutopian ideology that strives toward individual self-determination and eschews large, bureaucratic institutions and "elite" control (Turner 2006), while viewing technology consumption as a form of inevitable social progress (Kozinets 2008). These principles can be seen at work in various industries – transportation, tourism, education – where incumbents utilizing traditional, intermediated methods of distribution are being challenged by new entrants – often based in Silicon Valley – that employ technology to create direct connections between producers and consumers, disrupting institutionalized arrangements and ostensibly removing intermediaries from the value chain in the process. In demonstrating a set of alternative practices premised on a contrasting ideology, Tesla disrupted previously taken-for-granted routines in the field of automobile distribution, exposing and challenging the ideology that historically dominated the field and informed the practices of incumbent firms. This field thus represents an ideal site from which to explore my research questions.

4.2 Research Methodology and Methods

My choice of methods is intended to illuminate how different market actors work to promote or prevent change in the wake of doxic market disruption, with attention to the role of societal-level ideologies in informing this work. Utilizing Bourdieu's doxic framework as a sensitizing lens, I analyzed a combination of archival, netnographic, and interview data (see Table 4.1). The use of archival and netnographic data served two purposes: it allowed for further immersion in the research context, and it provided a rich set of discursive material for analysis. In line with other poststructural analyses (Humphreys and Thompson 2014; Kozinets 2008; Luedicke, Thompson, and Giesler 2010), I viewed this material as narratively reflecting the "culturally established discourses, metaphors, and tropes" (Humphreys and Thompson 2014, p. 883) of the broader society in which it is embedded. Thus, this data allowed me to account for both the practical institutional work being done by different actors – helping address the question of "what" was occurring – and for the ways in which this work was described and understood by the actors engaging in it, helping address the role of societal-level ideologies in informing the work. I also conducted supplemental interviews with both consumers and industry personnel. These interviews provided deeper insight into how actors understood the ongoing market disruption, and they allowed me to develop a more robust account of how specific actions and occurrences that emerged from my archival analysis – such as the launch of a new advertising campaign, or the mobilization of Tesla supporters to volunteer at company showrooms – were understood by the actors involved.

Table 4.1: Overview of Data Collection

Research Method	Record Type	Pages/Hours	Time Period
Archival	News Stories; Industry Reports and Policy Documents	650 pages	July 2006 - December 2018
	Executive Interviews; Conference Proceedings; Promotional Material	28 hours	
Netnographic	Online Forum Posts	1,162 pages	June 2012 - December 2018
	Field Notes	29 pages	
In-depth Interviews	5 interviews with Tesla enthusiasts	5 hours	March - October 2018
	3 interviews with automobile industry personnel	2 hours	
	Field Notes	12 pages	

4.2.1 Archival data

Archival data comprised media articles, industry reports, policy documents, published executive interviews, promotional materials and proceedings from annual National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA) conferences. This archival material provided insight into how market dynamics evolved over time, including how industry actors worked to defend themselves against disruption, how key public figures like Elon Musk endeavored to sustain disruption, and how heterodox and orthodox strategies changed, over time.

I used the Factiva database to find relevant media articles from three respected mass media publications – The New York Times, The Washington Post, and The Wall Street Journal – and a leading industry insider publication, Automotive News, as well as automotive industry

press releases from leading communications distributor PR Newswire, using the search terms “Tesla”, “dealer(s)”, “dealership(s)”, “direct(ly)”, and “distribute”. The time period covered by the search was July 2006 – when Tesla unveiled its first production vehicle, the Roadster – to December 2018. This starting point was chosen because it represents Tesla’s first foray into the auto market.

Articles and reports were also gathered from the website of the National Automobile Dealers Association, which maintained an ongoing public campaign aimed at stopping Tesla from direct-distributing its vehicles. This campaign involved both consumer-facing public relations efforts and government lobbying, and the materials gathered shed light on the different ways dealerships and their representatives worked to counter Tesla’s challenge. Further insight was gained from analysis of the NADA’s 2017 and 2018 annual conferences, accessed via the organization’s online video archive. This material helped illuminate how the industry perceived its ongoing role in a market subject to disruption.

Finally, I examined reports released by the United States Federal Trade Commission and the United States Department of Justice on the subject of automobile distribution. This material provided additional context around the original development of the intermediated, franchise system, as well as an ongoing account of regulatory dynamics following the current market disruption.

Materials were selected for inclusion in the dataset based on their relevance to my research questions, i.e. the extent to which they documented how market actors engaged and understood different kinds of institutional work. Table 4.2 outlines the nature and extent of archival data collection.

Table 4.2: Overview of Archival Data

Data Type	Data Sources	Material	Pages/Hours
News Stories	The New York Times; The Wall Street Journal; Automotive News; PR Newswire	138 Articles	287 pages
Industry Reports and Policy Documents	National Automobile Dealers Association; United States Federal Trade Commission; United States Department of Justice	7 Documents	249 pages
Published Executive Interviews	TED; CNN; BBC; Reuters; Stanford eCorner	21 Interviews and Speeches	7 hours
Conference Proceedings	National Automobile Dealers Association Annual Conference video archive	2 NADA Conferences (2017 & 2018)	21 hours
Promotional Material	Official NADA Blog; Official Tesla Blog; Advertisements via YouTube	34 Blog Posts 8 Advertisements	114 pages 20 minutes

4.2.2 Netnographic data

I also engaged in a netnography of two online discussion forums dedicated to Tesla: the Tesla Motors Club (TMC) forum, and r/teslamotors, a Reddit subforum. Following established selection guidelines (Kozinets 2010), these sites were chosen based on their relevance to my research questions, the presence of active and interactive communication between members, and the amount of detailed discursive material available for analysis. Users of these forums engage in

a variety of discussions around Tesla's business operations, including the company's struggle to distribute its products directly to consumers. In addition to ongoing immersion in these forums – documented via field notes – I purposively selected archived comment threads containing rich discussion about Tesla's efforts to direct-distribute, and the reaction to these efforts, using the same search terms and time period as for my archival data collection. Relevant threads were downloaded and saved as text documents. Elements such as unique webpage design and visuals were not relevant to my research questions, and as such, these elements were not saved. This netnographic analysis helped illuminate the institutional work dynamics at play among consumers in this space.

The decision to examine both consumer and industry participants through secondary data analysis was based on their divergent perspectives on Tesla's challenge as witnessed during preliminary investigation of the context – brand enthusiast consumers largely supported Tesla and were expected, together with the company itself, to function as promoters of market disruption, while automobile dealerships and industry representatives were the actors most immediately threatened by Tesla's challenge, and were thus expected to largely promote the status quo that has historically sustained them. Table 4.3 provides an overview of the sources and extent of netnographic data collection.

Table 4.3: Overview of Netnographic Data

Data Source	Threads/Posts	Pages
r/Tesla	64 Threads 3,508 posts	606 pages
Tesla Motors Club	27 Threads 1,805 posts	556 Pages

4.2.3 Interview data

Archival and netnographic data was supplemented with depth interview data gleaned from purposefully-sampled consumers and industry professionals employed by auto dealerships and lobbying organizations. The purpose of these interviews was to further reveal how these two groups of market actors understood their ongoing involvement in efforts aimed at maintaining or defending against disruption. Potential interview participants were identified via my archival and netnographic analyses. Consumer participants were identified through their involvement in the online discussion forums outlined previously; these participants were purposefully selected according to the richness and volume of their online comments, and those with a history of more frequent, more substantial comments were selected. Industry professionals were identified via their public involvement in the conflict over Tesla's market entry as identified through analysis of archival data. Professionals whose appearance in secondary data was both frequent and deeply involved were selected as potential participants.

Potential interview participants were contacted via e-mail, apprised of the research project through a letter of information, and asked to provide informed consent via a consent

form. All interviews were conducted via phone or VOIP. I employed protocols comprising various questions and probes in conducting interviews (Appendix A); these protocols were constructed according to my established pre-understanding (Arnold and Fischer 1994) of the context and my research aims. Following established depth interview techniques (McCracken 1988), sessions began with general biographical questions aimed at providing basic background information and establishing initial rapport, before moving to a series of semi-structured questions intended to move discussion to the area of interest. I began interviews by asking about each participant's background, including how and when they came to be involved in the automotive field, either professionally or as an enthusiast. Questioning then diverged, depending on the type of participant involved. For consumer participants, I proceeded to ask about their involvement in online discussions of Tesla, as well as their experiences purchasing vehicles from both Tesla and traditional dealerships. I then asked questions specific to the challenges Tesla has faced in rolling out its direct distribution model. These questions and probes were intended to elicit consumers' perceptions of ongoing market dynamics and descriptions of any work they engaged in. For dealership participants, I asked about perceptions of general trends in the automotive market, before moving to more specific questioning involving Tesla's market entry and dealers' individual and collective responses to this entry. I focused these interviews on understanding how dealers viewed the potential threat represented by Tesla, how they understood their ongoing role in this marketplace, and what actions were being taken to defend their positions.

All interviews were transcribed to a Microsoft Word document. Prior to conducting interviews, I received ethics clearance from the General Research Ethics Board at Queen's

University (Appendix B). Table 4.4 presents an overview of participants interviewed for this study.

Table 4.4: Overview of Interview Participants

Pseudonym	Role	Number of years Involved	Number of Interviews	Interview Length (Hours)
John	Consumer Enthusiast	10+	1	0.5
Marco	Consumer Enthusiast	5+	1	1
Shawn	Consumer Enthusiast	7	1	1
Trey	Consumer Enthusiast	5+	1	1.75
Adam	Consumer Enthusiast	7	1	0.5
Chris	Industry Professional	20	1	1.25
Henry	Industry Professional	35+	1	0.5
April	Industry Professional	5	1	0.5

4.3 Analysis

Collected archival, netnographic, and interview data, as well as associated field notes, were compiled and saved as text for analysis within NVivo software. Following established practice for qualitative research (Arnold and Fischer 1994; Belk, Fischer, and Kozinets 2013), I iterated between analysis and ongoing data collection. Archival data was used to establish an ongoing historical timeline of developments following the July 2006 introduction of Tesla’s Roadster. This timeline helped situate the work conducted by different actors in response to ongoing developments in the field and provided a structure around which I built my findings (see Appendix C for an abridged chronological overview and examples of corresponding archival

data). Given my theoretical lens, I focused analytical attention on the conduct of institutional work aimed at maintenance or disruption of status quo arrangements (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006) by consumers and marketers, with particular consideration for how this work was informed by broader societal-level ideologies. Throughout my analysis, I made regular comparison to the timeline I had established; this allowed me to trace how ongoing developments in the field were reflected in marketers and consumers' accounts, as well as how different forms of work arose over time. As part of my analysis, I categorized and coded data for anticipated and emergent themes until reaching the point of saturation (Spiggle 1994). This thematic analysis involved accounting for both the actions taken by different actors – the institutional work – as well as the ways in which this work was rhetorically constructed, i.e. its ideological content. Coding was conducted within cases (i.e. an individual interview or series of forum posts from a single user) and between cases (across interview participants and different forum threads), with patterns and consistencies across codes being used to formulate higher order themes. Development of themes was done in conjunction with regular comparison to the extant institutional work literature; this comparison allowed me to identify previously-accounted-for forms of work that were being conducted in my context, and by extension, to demarcate these forms from the emergent, novel work that was occurring.

Chapter 5

Findings

In outlining my findings, I trace developments in the field of automobile distribution to illustrate how orthodox defensive efforts led to novel forms of heterodox work, how heterodox efforts, in turn, informed orthodox strategies, and how, over time, this dialectic contributed to market change. These dynamics align with a Bourdieusian view of doxic disruption and change, whereby new understandings and arrangements arise from the interplay between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, as actors struggle to upend or maintain the status quo (Bourdieu 1977; Herrera 2005). In this formulation, opportunities for heterodox work – which, over time, can upset existing arrangements – arise from orthodox attempts to defend the doxa, as such defensive work necessarily implies the artificiality of doxa, and thus, the possibility of alternative arrangements. This interplay of orthodoxy and heterodoxy invokes societal, field, and practice levels, and helps reveal these levels' contribution to marketplace change.

5.1 Sowing the Seeds of Disruption: Market Entry and A New Vision

On July 19, 2006, Tesla unveiled its first production vehicle at an aircraft hangar in Santa Monica, California. That day also saw the launch of the official Tesla blog, which has functioned as an important space for its executives – including co-founder and CEO Elon Musk – to communicate directly with consumers. In the company's early years, this communication focused on discussing ongoing research and development hurdles and articulating visions for the company's future. I will now outline Tesla's early engagement in this work, which helped sow the seeds of the disruption to come.

Musk's early posts on the Tesla blog articulate what he viewed as the company's overarching reason for being, and connected this reasoning to a personal mission, as illustrated in this inaugural post from August 2006:

As you know, the initial product of Tesla Motors is a high performance electric sports car called the Tesla Roadster. However, some readers may not be aware of the fact that our long term plan is to build a wide range of models, including affordably priced family cars. This is because the overarching purpose of Tesla Motors (and the reason I am funding the company) is to help expedite the move from a mine-and-burn hydrocarbon economy towards a solar electric economy, which I believe to be the primary, but not exclusive, sustainable solution.

The firm's original purpose is explicitly connected to a project aimed at broader economic transformation, beyond the confines of the automotive field. This project is used as explanation for the company's product development and release strategy, and linked to broader societal change goals. In articulating a societal-level problem and simultaneously proposing potential solutions, Musk – who would go on to invest tens of millions of dollars of his personal fortune into the firm – links the firm to a personal project that transcends the field-level concerns of the automotive sector. Outlined in this way, the existence of Tesla's products stems not from the identification of any particular field-level opportunities unique to a given market, but from an apparent need to address problems that threaten the future of society. Despite its societal objectives, this project is intensely personal in nature; Musk has personally identified “the biggest problem” – one of great personal and social importance – and directs his own wealth and efforts to address the problem. The stated purpose of the company is its pursuit of Musk's goals, and he is the driving force behind its decisions.

From the outset, Tesla demonstrated its intent to approach distribution differently than market norms and regulations dictated. In an April 2007 blog post entitled “The Perfect Tesla Store”, Musk laid out his vision for a company-owned distribution network, and contrasted the customer experience of this model with that of the status quo, franchised dealership model:

If you asked people to rate whether they thought their car dealership was a good or bad place to visit, the response would be overwhelmingly bad...At Tesla Motors, we really want to improve aspects of the car business that we've found unpleasant as consumers. A major part of the user experience is the dealership or “Tesla Store,” as we refer to it. When you visit one of our stores to browse, buy, or service a car, we certainly want you to come away saying it was one of the best consumer experiences you ever had...The type of place we are striving for combines the feel of an Apple store, a Starbucks, and a good restaurant. I include the latter, because in a good restaurant you can always see the chef working in the kitchen. The chef has nothing to hide, and it is a pleasure to see the staff at work preparing the meal. The same will be true when Tesla Motors technicians work on cars...Rather than a nameless backroom person working on your car, you will be assigned a technician by name. If you have a question, your technician will address it with you directly. This is a better communication loop than talking to a customer rep, who talks to the service manager, who talks to the actual technician, which results in the classic "broken telephone" problem.

At this early stage, the justification for adopting an alternative distribution model is largely based on functional concerns around superior customer experience – providing direct connections between customers and the company ostensibly results in improved communication and a more personalized, luxurious experience. Existing distribution practices are seen as subjecting

customers to service conducted by “nameless backroom” people, resulting in “overwhelmingly bad” experiences. Tesla, by contrast, has nothing to hide, desiring only to create direct connections with customers and provide them with better service.

In this market, the franchised dealership model had been enshrined in both norm and law for several decades, and represented a taken-for-granted, doxic system, where practices had become largely disconnected from their underlying meanings. Tesla’s direct approach to distribution did not align with this established market doxa; its entry represented a potential threat to the system, and accordingly, provoked a reaction from market incumbents. These incumbents – dealers and their trade associations – responded to Tesla’s entry by engaging in defensive institutional work (Maguire and Hardy 2009) aimed at maintaining the doxa and protecting status quo arrangements. This defensive work, in turn, triggered counter-responses from Tesla and consumers, who mobilized to engage in disruptive institutional work on behalf of Tesla. These forms of work will now be discussed in turn.

5.2 The Regulatory War: Orthodox Response and the Creation of Heterodoxy

In June 2012, Tesla’s first full-size vehicle, the Model S, went on sale. In contrast to the low-volume Roadster – a boutique sports car that sold about 2,450 units over its lifespan – the Model S was intended to serve a substantially larger market. Four months later, auto dealers’ associations in New York and Massachusetts launched lawsuits against the company, claiming Tesla stores violated state laws protecting the franchised dealership model. These associations engage in a variety of activities on behalf of dealers, including legislative and regulatory affairs, industry relations, and public affairs; lobbying of lawmakers and regulators constitute a

significant portion of this work, with the federal-level trade association, the National Auto Dealers Association (henceforth NADA), spending more than \$4.7 million on lobbying efforts in 2017 (Center for Responsive Politics, 2018). Lawsuits and lobbying aimed at hobbling Tesla's efforts represent an established form of institutional work known as policing (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006), whereby actors work to maintain existing arrangements by "ensuring compliance through enforcement, auditing and monitoring" (p. 231). In October 2012, Musk took to the company blog to respond to these policing efforts and justify Tesla's approach to distribution:

At Tesla, we will continue to focus on the future and the future of your children, grandchildren and their children. In order to accelerate the adoption of EVs (electric vehicles), we must be able to create and execute a business model that allows us to advance the knowledge of EVs in a convenient, accessible, no pressure environment.

In responding to these initial attempts to maintain market orthodoxy through policing, Musk connects his mission to the heretical practices employed by his company; in selling electric vehicles, Tesla is not simply engaged in an economic transaction, but is looking out for the future of its customers' children. In order to continue doing so, the company must be permitted to maintain its direct distribution network. Musk imbues company practices with significance beyond their practical utility – a significance that would later be invoked by other actors working to follow in Musk's wake and promote heterodoxy. This ideological character stands in contrast to earlier, more functional justifications. More broadly, this represents a shift from a largely functional strategy based on service differentiation to a more disruptive approach that focused not just on the utility of new and existing practices, but on the ideologies underlying these practices. In this way, the lawsuits in New York and Massachusetts – some of the first major

action taken in the name of orthodoxy – had the effect of generating new heterodox work aimed at challenging market orthodoxy, thus elevating the conflict beyond the level of practice.

Dealers’ work to defend orthodox arrangements also made apparent to consumers the artificial, constructed nature of existing arrangements, as seen in this quote by Reddit user bonedaddy-jive, taken from a February 2015 discussion of dealers’ efforts:

They (auto dealerships) are like taxi companies railing against Uber and Lyft. People don't realize how much they hate cabs until they are given an alternative. Of course 75 years of lobbying and huge campaign contributions can protect all kinds of shitty business models in the short term.

Just as consumers were made aware of previously taken-for-granted – and “hated” – aspects of the taxi industry when alternatives were made available by disruptive platform businesses like Uber and Lyft, so too has Tesla’s arrival enabled consumers to realize a different way exists. What once went unrecognized is now made apparent with the arrival of new entrants wielding novel practices. Here, the ability of doxic arrangements to continue unabated for so long is attributed to strategies employed by orthodox actors: government lobbying and campaign contributions. These political efforts are seen as artificially extending the life of a business model that would have otherwise failed, thus helping perpetuate status quo practices supported by the orthodoxy.

In modelling an alternative approach to distribution and creating a discursive space from which to launch critiques of previously taken-for-granted status quo practices, Tesla laid the groundwork for an “awakening of political consciousness” (Bourdieu 1977, p. 170) as part of a battle between forces of orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Orthodox attempts to restore the doxa via

regulatory mechanisms spurred a variety of ideologically-driven heterodox work, which I will now outline.

5.2.1 Ideological Coupling

Throughout 2013, Tesla went on to face further legal and legislative challenges at the hands of dealers' associations in Minnesota, Texas, Virginia, and North Carolina. These appeals were met with varying degrees of success – in some states, Tesla was forbidden from opening stores, while in others they were given free rein to implement their direct model. Some states permitted Tesla to open a limited number of stores, while others allowed it to open “showrooms” that offer limited services; in many instances, these allowances were granted specially to Tesla, with incumbent manufacturers forced to abide by existing rules. Notably, these initial orthodox efforts at defending the status quo did not include rhetorical attempts to reinforce the meanings underlying orthodox practices, or contest the meanings underlying heterodox practices; in other words, there was no meaningful orthodox attempt to provide ideological justification for why status quo arrangements were preferable to the heterodox alternative. This absence left an ideological vacuum that heterodox actors worked to fill, by coupling Tesla's heretical practices with culturally-resonant ideologies – including populism, technological determinism, and environmentalism – thus imbuing these practices with positive meaning beyond their functional utility. This blended ideological perspective favours technological innovation and design as a means of addressing broader social and environmental problems and privileges the demands and power of ordinary citizens above those perceived as corrupt, bureaucratic elites. Heterodox actors also invoked these ideologies to critique orthodox practices and infuse them with negative meaning. Taken together, this ideological coupling work aimed to provide justification for

changes to status quo market arrangements by portraying these arrangements as undesirable and counterposing heterodox practices as an ideologically-preferable alternative. I will now outline how heterodox actors drew on each of the three ideologies in conducting coupling work.

5.2.1.1 Technological Determinism

Underlying Tesla's approach is a belief in innovative technology as a means of bringing about positive change and facilitating desirable future arrangements, as seen in the following quote from March 2014, where Musk explains his fascination with technological development:

I usually describe myself as an engineer, that's basically what I've been doing since I was a kid. I'm interested in things that change the world or that affect the future and wondrous, new technology where you see it and you're like, "Wow, how did that even happen? How is that possible?"

New technologies are seen here as generally responsible for opening up new, previously unthinkable opportunities and avenues of action. Tesla's challenge to existing field arrangements is likewise viewed as part of a historical, technology-driven mission propelling society ever forward. This tech-centric view of progress is coupled with dealers' practices in the following quote from interview participant John, in which he expresses a degree of empathy for dealers in the wake of Tesla's disruption:

I can understand (dealers') position – nobody likes to be obsoleted, nobody likes to be made redundant. There's two parts to it, right – there's dealership owners who are going to lose their investments, just like taxi cabs medallion owners saw their value decline

precipitously because of Uber and Lyft. It's a bit of a stranded asset, it's something that just declines in value and there's no way to recover because of technology and progress moving forward. I think the other part of it is people who are employees at dealerships – dealers are really concerned about this, I don't think there's really anything they can do about it. That's really more of a societal, governmental, social safety net issue. Progress is hard to stop, and I see their point, but there aren't any buggy whip manufacturers around anymore, either.

Auto dealers are perceived as simply another in a long list of market actors made redundant by technological innovation. Just as technology has propelled humanity into a future without buggy whip manufacturers, so too will it make obsolete the franchise dealer model. Such progress is seen as unavoidable – all that can be done is for state actors to implement social safety nets to catch those knocked clear by the forward march. This ideology is coupled to heterodox practices – and a broader transformational project – in the following quote by interview participant Marco, describing his purchase of a Tesla:

It's the first car I've ever owned for more than two years, and I became deeply enamoured of them when I first heard about them. But when I bought it online, just like buying a phone, I began to realize that it was transforming the world, and when the supercharger network started to be built out, I started to realize just how important the whole thing was in promoting more sustainable transportation.

The ability to purchase an automobile in the same manner as a typically less-involved consumer product, like a phone, is seen as indicative of wider changes – technology was able to dramatically simplify what was once a highly-involved process, and, combined with the

continued development of charging infrastructure, has the potential to transform the world. Across these narratives, technological advances are related to a broader, societal-level change project. Technology is seen as a bridge to a specific vision of the future in which some of the primary problems of the current age – environmental degradation and climate change – are ameliorated, and a disastrous potential future averted. Heterodox practices are thus understood through the lens of important ideological meaning – their adoption is not only desirable, but almost inevitable – while orthodox actors are seen as luddites who do not understand their time has passed.

5.2.1.2 Environmentalism

In this formulation, technological progress is not an end in itself, but a means of transforming society such that the ecological damage being done by humanity can be halted, and its continued success ensured. In the following quote, Musk makes explicit the connections between innovative technology and an environmental mission:

The people of Earth will have to make a decision – to what degree are we willing to sacrifice the future for the present? The overwhelming opinion of the scientific community is that we should not put billions of tons of carbon into the atmosphere, which is what we're doing. Unless we change the rules – because the rules currently strongly favour hydrocarbons – I think we're in for a really rough future [...] At some point we will have no choice, because we'll run out of hydrocarbons to mine and burn, and we'll have to transition to a sustainable energy economy. So sooner or later we'll have to go toward a solar-electric future, it's better for the world if we go sooner rather

than later. The goal of Tesla and SolarCity is to minimize the existential threat of a delayed transition to a sustainable energy economy.

In arguing against the sustainability of current environmental practices and suggesting an inevitable “solar-electric” future, Musk couples his practices – with both Tesla and solar power system manufacturer SolarCity – with an ideological project aimed at hastening the adoption of new technologies and abating “existential threats” in the process. While Musk sees this adoption as unavoidable, it must still be hastened, as it is believed humanity is rapidly approaching an ecological point of no return. Musk’s concern for the future of the environment – and Tesla’s place in ensuring that future is a positive one – is echoed by interview participant John, discussing his passion for Tesla:

A lot of this impetus is the fact that I have children. I have to plan for them, for the world to be a better place when I’m gone. They’re toddlers right now, but I would love for them to live in a world where cars are all electric, they’re all self-driving, auto accidents are reduced to an extremely small amount, and we’ve made some real inroads tackling these environmental problems.

These comments echo Musk’s earlier suggestion that his efforts to hasten the adoption of electric vehicles – itself facilitated through a direct distribution model – stem from a “focus on the future and the future of your children”. In coupling an environmentalist ideology with Tesla’s market operations, John calls for dynamic market changes that will result in the world being a “better place” for his children.

Technological progress is seen here as key to the preservation of the natural environment and the abatement of “existential threats”; the moral good enabled by technology goes beyond

human-centered, techtopian social progress (Kozinets 2008) to also encompass the natural world. This blend of technologism and environmentalism resembles so-called bright green environmentalism (Shear 2011; Steffan 2006) that has risen to prominence among firms and states in recent years. Steffan (2009) distinguishes bright green environmentalism from other, more traditional forms of environmentalist ideology, which he terms dark green and light green environmentalism. Dark green environmentalists view environmental degradation as an inevitable outcome of industrialized civilization; reminiscent of the Green Luddites (Kozinets 2008), they eschew rampant consumerism and seek to reduce the impact of humanity and its technological advancements on the natural world. Light green environmentalists view environmental protection as a personal responsibility that can be best addressed by making informed choices in the marketplace; in line with a view of consumers as responsabilized subjects (Giesler and Veresiu 2014), culpability is placed in the hands of individual consumers rather than the broader systems that structure decisions, and political reform is eschewed in favour of individual lifestyle choices. In contrast, bright green environmentalists seek significant structural change to bring about a sustainable environmental future, but rather than shun technology – as dark greens do – bright greens embrace it as the primary means by which such a future can be achieved. In this formulation, technology-driven change is both desirable and inevitable; entrepreneurial actors, both market- and state-based, are charged with developing and deploying innovations that will help ensure humanity's continued survival and prosperity through environmental sustainability.

In the case of Tesla, bright green environmentalism is melded with populist appeals centered on a struggle against corrupt, entrenched elites, and the responsibility of government to enact the will of the public. Tesla and its consumers are seen as key players in ensuring the

heterodox project's success, but the ability of technology to bring about a sustainable future is also contingent on cooperation from state actors who control the regulatory environment, and who are perceived as having been corrupted by moneyed, establishment elites working to further orthodoxy.

5.2.1.3 Populism

In response to orthodox policing efforts, Musk and consumers worked to couple populist ideology to both heterodox and orthodox practices. An early example of this is seen in the following excerpt from a June 2013 Tesla shareholder meeting, in which Musk addressed Tesla's difficulties in implementing its model:

The challenge we face, of course, is that the auto dealers are very influential at the state level, among the legislatures. Very often, this is not some small mom-and-pop operation, it's the giant auto dealers, the big national dealers that are the biggest challenge here. Sometimes people think we're fighting some small auto dealers – no, we're fighting the giant ones that have the big money to spend, not the little ones. But if you look at the opinion polls in any state or nationwide, anywhere, in any context, as to whether people want direct sales, the answer is overwhelmingly 'yes'. So in North Carolina or Texas, obviously in California or nationwide, the percentage of people in favour of allowing Tesla to do direct sales varies from a low of 86% to 99%. And in the case of the 86% there was a concerted effort on the part of auto dealers to get everyone they could to possibly vote against it, and it was still 86% in favour. Clearly, if democracy was working properly, and legislators were implementing the will of the

people, something else would be happening, and there would not be legislation trying to artificially restrict direct sales. Right now, the auto dealers' association is crowing about the fact they were able to defeat us in Texas, and they're making progress in North Carolina and stopping us in Virginia. I think it's outrageous that they would crow about a perversion of democracy, that's just wrong. I think they're making a big mistake, and I think what's actually going to happen is, I think customers are going to lead a revolt on this front. If I was in the customer's position and some [auto dealers' association] was so happy about being able to spend lots of money and pervert democracy in a bad direction, I would fight really hard to sell [Tesla's] product. And I think that's what's going to happen.

Here, Musk's characterization of the situation takes on a distinctly ideological tenor, as he works to couple practices – both Tesla's and the dealer lobby's – with populist ideology. Auto dealers are viewed as thwarting “the will of the people” through their undue influence over the political process. Rather than deferring to public opinion – which Musk appeals to by invoking opinion polls supportive of his position – legislators are seen as acquiescing to corrupt, elite interests – the “giant ones who have money to spend” – and perverting democracy in the process. But power to reverse this state of affairs and bring about market change is ascribed to individual consumers; Musk's prediction of a popular “revolt” presages novel forms of consumer involvement that began to develop in response to these legislative challenges.

Consumers began echoing Musk's claims, suggesting that dealers and their allies were corrupting democracy through connections to legislators, as seen in this March 2014 quote from TMC user yobigd20, discussing dealers' efforts to lobby governments in support of the franchised dealer model:

It seems the actions of a few people (those NOT representing the best interests of the public) with deep pockets are the ones driving the lobbying efforts against Tesla, and individually trying to fight back against them is impossible. However, it's very clear from this poll that WE THE PEOPLE are in favor of the direct sales model. What ever happened to a "Government of the people, by the people, for the people?"?? Certainly those lobbying the politicians against Tesla are not representing the majority of public interest. They are only protecting THEIR OWN interest, THEIR OWN monopolies and this needs to stop. They argue that dealerships are there to protect the consumer but that is very much untrue as many, if not all, of us have never had a positive experience at a dealership.

Invoking populist ideology, this user portrays dealers as benefitting at the expense of not just consumers, but the democratic process and the broader public interest. Through the claim that consumers' individual experiences with dealers are almost universally negative, yobigd20 counters dealers' suggestions that their model should be protected. Traditional dealers are viewed as corrupt meddlers who are, at best, irrelevant, and at worst, actively complicit in perverting the functioning of democracy. This adversarial construction of the traditional dealership system plays a key role in the work being conducted by consumers in support of Tesla's continued operations. In portraying intermediaries as dishonest meddlers that should be removed so the people's will may be served, this consumer couples populist ideology with market practices to inform efforts aimed at promoting change. Here again, distribution arrangements possess an ideological character that transcends functional and logistical concerns – intermediaries are undesirable not simply because they add cost or inconvenience for

consumers, but because they are viewed as ideological opponents in a larger battle to overturn a corrupt status quo.

Underlying Tesla's approach to distribution is a belief in the ability of empowered, directly-connected consumers to make informed decisions without the need for expert guidance. This belief is reflected in Tesla's direct distribution model, whereby consumers can make online purchases directly from the company, without ever having to engage with a company employee. The importance of this directness is illustrated in the following quote from March 2014, in which Reddit user RibsNGibs contrasts his traditional dealership experiences with his experience purchasing a Tesla:

A few years ago, my old car was dying and I was in the market for a new car. I had actually already decided on which car I was going to get - a Honda Element. All I needed to do was choose a color and buy one. Well, choose a color, do a bunch of research online and through my car-lover friends, call or go to a bunch of dealers, prove to them that I did all my research so that they wouldn't fuck me, get the cheapest offer, go there and sign a bunch of papers, avoid all the hard sells on shit I don't need, go over the paperwork to make sure they didn't tack on any additional hidden fees, etc., etc., etc..

In my head it was such a hassle that I procrastinated, for like 2 years, while barely keeping my old car alive, and then Tesla came around and I realized I could buy without any of that fucking bullshit, and then I poked the "pay with PayPal" button and then I had a new car a little while later. It was like this huge weight lifted off my shoulders when I realized I didn't have to deal with anybody.

Consumers are seen here as proficient actors capable of taking on the burden of educating themselves without the need for expert guidance. Free of intermediated interference, the process becomes almost mystical – a button is poked, and a vehicle materializes shortly thereafter. Underlying this approach to distribution is a belief in the power of technology to create direct connections between actors, simultaneously eliminating the need for “expert” opinion and placing responsibility in the hands of self-reliant consumers to engage in informed transactions. It thus represents a blending of elements of Tesla’s underlying tech-centric and populist ideologies, with technology ostensibly obviating the need for self-interested elites and empowering common people to control their fates.

Meanwhile, orthodox efforts to police the market are situated as part of an ongoing, historic effort to artificially maintain the status quo, as seen in the following quote from February 2016, in which TMC user CHG-ON traces orthodox strategies used to stifle change in previous eras:

I think these industries, auto and oil, especially, are stuck in their model and refuse to give it up. The world changes every day and they will have no part of it. History has proven, as has been well said here in previous responses to this thread, that sticking your head in the sand simply does not work. My fear is that these old white men clubs have so much power, both politically and financially, that they could snuff out Tesla and the cause. I know they are all trying to do that. We see it every day in the press. These companies have the Gov't and the media firmly planted in the palms of their obscenely rich hands. Look at how powerfully they have ruled us since the early 1900's when Standard Oil, GM and Firestone got together and wiped out mass transportation in many parts of the country, especially CA, by buying up all the trolleys and pulling up

the tracks and everything. They have forced us into addiction as evilly as the drug cartels have. And they have had a profoundly larger impact than even those devils: many, many more deaths through pollution and accidents at the very least. They have also impoverished many of us though the allure of the sexiest cars and absurdly high energy prices. How many of us have felt the pinch at the pump or trying to pay our home heating bills?

Here, orthodox actors, fearing how innovation may impact their dominant position are seen as “stuck” in their ways, their position fortified through collusion with, or outright control of, state actors who shield them from the power of the free market. The money and political influence wielded by these corrupt elites has allowed for the creation of a system where state and media actors are controlled by self-serving corporate interests, and the common people are “ruled”, “impoverished”, and “forced into addiction” to by these interests. Through their commitment to orthodox practices, these figures are not simply preventing the benefits of progress from accruing to consumers, but are actively causing harm. By contrast, Tesla is seen to be leading a “cause” against the forces at the root of this perversion. Here, Tesla’s actions represent more than simply a means of achieving progress – they form the basis of a broader ideological mission working to emancipate consumers from a corrupt system. This populist-inspired cultural narrative draws on historical precedent to illustrate how a corrupt elite has worked against the people’s interest in the past, and how they continue to do so today. Tesla’s heterodox challenge is believed to be at risk of being derailed by moneyed interests colluding with dishonest politicians and a compliant media.

Throughout these narratives, “the people” – backed by a charismatic leader who seeks to bypass intermediaries and deliver his innovations directly to the people – are pitted against a

corrupt, elite establishment that seeks to maintain the status quo; this framing is central to populist ideologies. However, populism alone is generally too malleable and “thin” an ideology to address complex sociopolitical issues – it thus “attaches” itself to other ideologies and takes different shapes in order to promote specific political projects (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017, p. 6). In their efforts to promote market change, heterodox actors in this space have blended elements from a resurgent populist wave (Bröning 2016; Inglehart and Norris 2016; Swanson 2017) and a growing techno-environmental movement (Shear 2011) to craft a culturally-resonant ideology (Holt and Cameron 2010) that has served as a mobilizing force.

This blend of techno-determinism and populist disdain for corrupt, bureaucratic systems is also reminiscent of the Californian Ideology formulated by Barbrook and Cameron (1996) to describe a unique way of thinking common to many hi-tech Silicon Valley-based firms. The Californian Ideology champions the use of technology as a means of creating direct connections between like-minded individuals, thereby reducing the need for, and influence of, large hierarchical structures that stifle individual liberty. It thus simultaneously embodies the ideal of individual self-sufficiency and the 1960’s-era counterculture notion of egalitarian collaboration free of hierarchical pressures. As explicated by Turner (2006), this ideological melding can be traced back to 1960s counterculture movements, where members sought to liberate themselves from what they viewed as the oppressive yoke of entrenched government, military, and corporate institutions. Here, individual endeavour toward emancipation is seen as key to social change, and liberation is achieved by working around and apart from established institutions, rather than within them.

The ascent of the Californian Ideology coincided with the rising popularity of the Internet in the 1990s; it has since become the “day-to-day” creed of entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley and

beyond (Turner 2006; p. 208), its ethos reflected in industry publications such as Wired Magazine and Fast Company. While the populist elements of the Californian Ideology emphasize the importance of direct connections in ensuring individual liberty, and thereby take on a libertarian character, heterodox actors also highlight other elements of populism – in particular, the notion of a detached elite thwarting the people’s will – that have enjoyed a resurgence in recent years. In the political realm, populist candidates – such as Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders – and populist movements, such as Brexit, have enjoyed success in recent years by portraying existing arrangements as the corrupt product of distant elites who have isolated themselves from the common people. The popularity of these ideologies can also be seen at work in the marketplace through the rise of the so-called sharing economy, in which technology allows intermediaries to be ostensibly removed from transactions, leaving only directly-connected individuals to coordinate with one another. Just like the purchase of a vehicle, transportation and accommodation can be arranged through companies like Uber and Airbnb with the press of a button, while consumers are able to bypass intermediaries – such as taxi and hotel associations – that are perceived as corrupt and outdated in their fight to maintain status quo arrangements at consumers’ expense (Fernholz 2014; Kay 2014). This rising populist wave, and the broader Californian Ideology, are thus mirrored in the direct distribution practices enacted across industries by a variety of companies whose market entry has served to disrupt the status quo. Likewise, the comments by yobigd20 and RibsNGibs reflect a broader cultural narrative emphasizing the authenticity of direct connections and the obsolescence and unscrupulousness of intermediaries. In my context, the culturally-resonant ideology underlying Tesla’s approach to distribution clashed with the field’s status quo arrangements and served as a

source of disruption, as actors working to promote heterodoxy coupled practices with ideologies as a means of justifying market change.

Throughout these narratives, Tesla's practices are imbued with a transcendent purpose and connected to a culturally-resonant belief system, while traditional dealers are implicated as deceitful and corrupt, driven only by base economic interest. This contrast is made possible via the direct connection enabled by Tesla's distribution model – its salespeople are perceived as direct extensions of the company's broader mission, while salespeople associated with franchise dealers are seen as primarily concerned with earning profit, disconnected from any larger purpose. In line with the blended ideology underlying Tesla's operations, intermediaries are seen as unwelcome interlopers – just as corporations pervert democracy at a societal level by inserting themselves in between individual citizens and elected officials, car dealers are perceived to sully individual-level transactions by inserting themselves and engaging in “shady tactics” while offering little or nothing in return. In both instances, the perceived will of the people is thwarted by a corrupt elite seeking to maintain the status quo. Meanwhile, Musk is invoked as a heroic revolutionary struggling against this corruption and leading a vital change project – this represents a novel form of institutional work which I will now outline.

5.2.2 Heroizing

In his public pronouncements – from outlining his personal vision for Tesla, to illustrating the struggle against forces of orthodoxy – Elon Musk has positioned himself as an independent iconoclast with a world-changing vision, as seen in this excerpt from a March 2013 interview, in which he outlines his initial motivation for becoming involved with Tesla:

It goes back to when I was in university – I thought about what are the problems that are most likely to affect the future of the world, or future of humanity. I think it’s extremely important we have sustainable transport and sustainable energy production. That overall sustainable energy problem is the biggest problem we have to solve this century... Given that we have to solve sustainable electricity generation, it makes sense for us to have electric cars as the mode of transport.

Musk’s work with Tesla is here connected to a much broader goal – he views sustainable energy as the “biggest problem” facing humanity and has decided to address the problem personally. This follows in the vein of other business leaders lionized as individualist, capitalist champions, whose pursuit of enlightened self-interest has provided society with myriad innovations and improved the world as a result (Luskin and Greta 2011). These leaders exhibit qualities of the archetypal “Randian Hero” reflected in the works of author Ayn Rand, a libertarian novelist and philosopher whose works have inspired a host of politicians, business leaders, and others. Randian Heroes engage in all-encompassing pursuit of a singular vision that defies tradition (Gothelf and Salmieri 2015). Such heroes are creative, ambitious, independent, and principled innovators; their defiance of established tradition leads to their persecution at the hands of lesser minds. True to their idiosyncratic nature, these heroes are driven to introduce heterodox notions that disrupt institutional arrangements, bringing them into conflict with forces of orthodoxy.

In this context, Musk represents a Randian Hero who has served to mobilize orthodox and heterodox response through his “imposition of a definition of the world” which has been adopted or disputed by others (Bourdieu 2005, p. 39). This heroic narrative serves to mobilize heterodox actors not simply because of its culturally-resonant content, but also because of its

method of delivery – direct, and with perceived authenticity, as illustrated in the following comment from interview participant Trey:

Elon strikes me as a genuine, honest, brilliant individual, and funny, the likes of which you just don't see in the corporate world very often. In fact, it's hard to think of another CEO who does anything like what he does in terms of speaking to the public, and not doing it in a way where everything he said was written beforehand by the PR department. He's able to actually stand up there and articulate, to share his excitement for, say, a new product like the Tesla Semi. He's able to share that enthusiasm that he has, because it's real! The product is real, the truck is real, it really does what it says.

Trey perceives Tesla and Musk as authentic in their dealings with consumers; in contrast to other companies and CEOs whose public pronouncements are created by interlopers in the public relations department, Musk's communications are viewed as sincere and genuine because they arrive unfiltered and are passionately delivered by the man himself. The direct nature of these communications serves to not only reinforce Trey's belief in Tesla's mission, but leads him to defend Musk against those who would besmirch his character. Populist ideology is married with notions of the Randian hero, as a charismatic, visionary leader fosters direct connections with the people, allowing him to bypass the corrupting influence of establishment intermediaries and deliver an earnest message in support of his innovative offerings.

In coming to Tesla's defense and engaging in work on behalf of the firm, consumers view themselves as helping it – and its heroic founder – achieve a broader mission, as illustrated in the following quote from interview participant Trey:

Trey: I really think that Elon and the company are doing this for absolutely the best reasons, to the point where I wanna be part of it, it makes me want to play a role in some shape or form.

Interviewer: What do you think those reasons are?

Trey: Starting with their mission, which is real. That's not just a bunch of words made up by the marketing department. To accelerate the transition to sustainable transportation and energy – that exactly sums up what they're about. It's not just a fluffy bit of copy written by the marketing people. Tell me, what is the mission of General Motors? What is the mission of BMW? The best they can come up with is to make great cars, to make a great driving experience. But that's about as deep as it goes, and Tesla's really out to inspire a very important change in the way the world operates. [...] Tesla can tell you exactly what it is they're doing, and why, and here's why it's important. So it's been very gratifying to play some very small role in that.

Here, Trey's passionate involvement is connected to Tesla's larger undertaking. Musk, heroically aligned with a culturally-resonant ideology – and the company's "real" mission, communicated directly to consumers, untainted by interlopers in the marketing department – serves to inspire. Tesla's overarching ethos – to affect "a very important change in the way the world operates" – is contrasted with other auto manufacturers, which, at best, can offer only functional benefits. This sense of contributing to a larger, ongoing project is echoed by interview participant John:

John: I think it goes back to the fact that they're a bold company. Not only do I feel like I'm an engineering nerd, but I'm an environmentalist, I have concerns about climate change. And it goes back to Elon and Tesla – not only do they make vehicles, but their

long term plan is vehicles, stationary storage, they have a solar gigafactory in New York. Their ideals align with my own, which makes it much easier to be a supporter of them, and it makes it much easier to forgive some of their failings – they’re not profitable, they have a lot of challenges, they have a lot of delivery issues. When you like an individual, it’s a lot easier for you to forgive their failings than if you don’t care for somebody, or they’re not on the same wavelength as you. So when Tesla stumbles, hey, that’s fine. When GM or Ford or some other company that’s really just a profit-motivated firm that’s just trying to address shareholder needs first stumbles, I don’t give them the same benefit of the doubt.

Musk, the Randian Hero, boldly pursues his vision across multiple fronts – not simply vehicles, but energy production and storage. This boldness – combined with an ideological alignment between company, consumer, and Musk’s various initiatives – serves to inspire a degree of loyalty not afforded to companies that promote no overarching vision and fail to demonstrate the inspirational courage that Musk and Tesla do. This loyalty allows John to overlook the company’s functional shortcomings and remain supportive.

In other circumstances, consumer involvement may have been limited to patronizing and evangelizing the brand; however, owing to the defensive reaction of orthodox actors in this space, consumers are motivated to engage in a variety of other work aimed at countering orthodox efforts and continuing the disruption of the status quo. Involvement is motivated by consumers’ adherence to Tesla’s mission and Musk’s inspirational example, as well as the belief that corrupt orthodox actors are unfairly maintaining their position via dubious means. This has led to other forms of institutional work aimed at supporting heterodoxy, including brand-based activism and professional work; these activities span the boundary between actor categories, with

consumers becoming involved in work traditionally done by other actors. I will now outline consumer involvement in this cross-boundary work.

5.2.3 Cross-boundary Work

5.2.3.1 Brand-based Activism

In response to dealers' state-level efforts to bar Tesla from operating, consumers began engaging in a variety of activities – including contacting elected representatives, signing petitions, attending public hearings, and protesting – aimed at mobilizing support and demonstrating grassroots consumer support for Tesla's direct distribution model. On June 22, 2013 – 18 days after Elon Musk's prediction of a consumer "revolt" in response to dealers' lobbying efforts – TMC user yobigd20 created a thread entitled "Get Involved – It's time to get serious about solving the dealership franchise problem" with the following post:

What can we do, as people of this country that want to make a difference? Each one of us should have the right to purchase and own this great American product without any interference from auto dealers and the ridiculous state laws they are trying to push. I remember Elon himself said that the real solution to this must be driven by the people, us, and that Tesla can't do it alone. I have 2 more suggestions that will help on top of the FTC complaints and White House petitions. They are not a solution, but will help spread the word and draw more attention to this manner. The more people are aware of this situation the better. I think most Americans would be in agreement that this great American company with a great product should be allowed to sell it to the people in its own country!

Invoking Musk's own plea, this user calls for consumers to come together to formulate strategies aimed at countering dealers' interference. Evoking populist and patriotic sentiments, the user suggests efforts aimed at countering such interference "must be driven by the people", and questions why American citizens are not free to purchase a "great American product" in their own country. Users in this thread continue in their attempts to formulate political strategies to assist with Tesla's efforts, as seen in the following quote from r/tesla user jeff_adams:

All polls agree with your assessment. Consumers believe that Tesla should be able to sell directly to them, instead of through a dealership.

Maybe the answer is ballot propositions in the affected states. Let the majority decide if Tesla can do business in their state (instead of the representatives). NADA can outspend Tesla 20-1 in commercials and I still think citizens would side with Tesla. I think a certain amount of signatures on petitions would be required to get it on the ballot.

Perhaps that is our role? To help in our home states to get enough signatures from voters to get it on the ballots? I think close to 90% of the people that can't even afford to buy a Tesla now would still side with people's rights to buy it.

This user's narrative invokes several elements of populist ideology – public polls apparently demonstrate majority support for Tesla's direct-distribution model, lending it legitimacy, and one potential "answer" to dealers' ongoing lobbying efforts through the NADA is to bring the issue directly to the people via referendum. In true grassroots fashion, the user suggests supporters collectively organize in each state to launch petitions aimed at achieving a ballot proposition – one which will apparently enjoy 90% support from people who cannot even afford the vehicle.

No such state-level ballot measures materialized; however, a petition calling on the federal government to legalize direct distribution – and thereby Tesla’s continued operations – in all 50 states was later launched. In less than a month, the petition attracted 100,000 signatures and prompted a response from the federal government; however, rather than directly addressing the issue, the government placed responsibility for the issue with individual states, and the state-by-state battles continued (Robillard 2014).

Throughout the process of fighting for Tesla’s direct distribution model, Musk has made direct pleas to consumers, often with the apparent goal of stoking the “revolt” he anticipated. This is illustrated in the following excerpt from a Tesla blog post entitled “To the People of New Jersey”, written following New Jersey’s March 2014 decision to outlaw Tesla’s direct distribution model:

On Tuesday, under pressure from the New Jersey auto dealer lobby to protect its monopoly, the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC), composed of political appointees of the Governor, ended your right to purchase vehicles at a manufacturer store within the state. Governor Christie had promised that this would be put to a vote of the elected state legislature, which is the appropriate way to change the law. When it became apparent to the auto dealer lobby that this approach would not succeed, they cut a backroom deal with the Governor to circumvent the legislative process and pass a regulation that is fundamentally contrary to the intent of the law.

We are evaluating judicial remedies to correct the situation. Also, if you believe that your right to buy direct at a Tesla store should be restored, please contact your state senator & assemblyman: www.njleg.state.nj.us/districts/districtnumbers.asp.

Finally, we would like to thank the many people who showed up in Trenton on Tuesday to support Tesla and speak out against the MVC's back-door tactics in passing this regulation change without public consultation or due process. It was an amazing response at very short notice and much appreciated.

Musk's populist narrative makes direct entreaties to "the people" to make their voices heard in light of corrupt elites – political commission cronies colluding with dealer lobbies – denying these people their rights and circumventing democracy via "backroom deals". Similar posts were made – and direct email campaigns launched – as Tesla went on to face similar obstacles in Missouri, Michigan, and other states. In each, legislators are portrayed as conspiring with dealers' associations to rob consumers of their rights; a plea is then made for consumers to contact representatives and voice their concerns. Consumers responded to these calls, but also continued to be active in formulating their own strategies to assist Tesla, as illustrated in the following quote by TMC user SCW-Greg, taken from a forum thread created in March 2014 titled "Get proactive against National Dealer Association":

So in reading about the close call with dealers nearly getting Tesla banned in WA, Tesla getting blocked in NJ, Ohio, Texas, and other states. . .state by state, we need to get ahead of the curve. Get proactive.

Rather than learning about these dealer sneak attacks after the fact, discovering padded pockets of *every* Legislator, skating some quietly worded bill by while no one is looking ... we should look at the states most "at risk" and quickly get groups of local owners together, beyond the letters you/we can all write, we need to stage rallies at the capitals of each state. Take legislators out for test drives. Create Q and A literature to

hand out. Show them public polls on the subject. The better service and experience we have received. Encourage them to go to Tesla HQ and get a factory tour of this great American (capitalist) company. To get in front of them, personally, sooner than too late.

Get together with your local TM Owner's group and start now. Often just simple acts of a group showing up can have big impact. Get your local news media involved too.

Ultimately, every state is at risk, but some more than others. Thinking nationally, what are the top 10 states at risk? Which ones can we have the most influence on? Are some states more strategic to target first, in terms of public awareness or future legal impact? Other leverage points?

Here, efforts are made to identify where Tesla is most vulnerable to attack and solicit advice from the collective regarding future strategies aimed at defending the company. In this view, consumers learn of dealers' "sneak attacks", a problem that can be remedied through strategic, proactive action. This represents an amplification of elements of populism – corrupt government and corporate elites as moral antagonists – that acts as a rallying call for mobilized consumer effort against these antagonists. These populist sentiments are also blended with patriotic appeals, as seen in the following quote from June 2013 by TMC user Curt Renz:

There really is no additional need for laws to protect the dealerships' territories. The only reason would be to keep out a new competing brand with alternative methods for sales and service. That's un-American, anti-free enterprise, anti-consumer and contrary to the interstate commerce clause of the United States Constitution. Yet some state legislators

bow to contributors of large amounts of money to their election campaigns rather than the desires of their constituents.

Please sign the petition and then write state and federal officials and ask them to overturn laws preventing Tesla from selling and servicing directly to consumers.

This call for activism blends elements of populism and American patriotism, suggesting that orthodox arrangements are held in place via “un-American” regulations sustained by corrupt state officials who “bow” to moneyed special interests. Through their engagement in these activist behaviours, consumers both responded to direct appeals from a trusted leader and engaged in proactive, independent mobilization efforts. Underlying these efforts is a belief in the power of “the people” to affect meaningful change and dismantle corrupt systems through coordinated activism. In addition to engaging in activist-like behaviours, consumers began taking on work that spanned and blurred the institutional boundary between consumers and professionals.

5.2.3.2 Professional Work

In response to dealers’ attacks on Tesla, consumers voluntarily assumed duties that would typically have been conducted by professionals in the employ of the company. In a TMC thread titled “Strategies to Support Tesla’s Direct Auto Sales Model”, users began collecting legal arguments that could be employed on behalf of the company. Users in this and similar threads also created documents and websites where rebuttals to common rhetorical criticisms of Tesla could be collected, and the legal issues unique to each state could be catalogued. The purpose of collecting this material was to facilitate the creation of strategies aimed at supporting Tesla’s

field-level work; these strategies could then be employed by consumers, and ostensibly, the company itself.

While much of this strategizing was aimed at rhetorical defense, it also extended to practical, on-the-ground action when necessitated by circumstance. In some states where Tesla faced legal or legislative hurdles, legislators arrived at a sort of middle-ground, deciding to neither ban the company nor give it free reign to direct distribute. In Texas, for example, Tesla was permitted to open a limited number of product “showrooms”, where vehicles could be viewed, but not purchased or test-driven, and certain topics of discussion – such as pricing and financing – remained off-limits for company personnel in their dealings with customers. Responding to these arrangements, consumers began formulating ways to conduct the work that Tesla was forbidden from engaging in, as seen in the following June 2013 quote from TMC user lolachampcar:

The approach may just be to sneak around the edges of this until the momentum grows. For example, Tesla can have showrooms, service centers and [Model S vehicles] can be registered in the state. Tesla can not "sell" the cars. Fine, the showrooms show like they do everywhere else and clearly state that Texas law prevents them from selling. Customers can find information on the web site. If [they] need any help related to pricing or the buying process, [we provide] the names and numbers of local owners that can (legally) answer those questions, as they are not employees of, or otherwise compensated by, Tesla. If it is needed in Florida, I'll gladly do it. Heck, I am already doing it and will continue to do what I can to help others experience the epiphany that is Tesla.

Rather than tackling problems head-on through regulatory challenges, this consumer suggests “sneaking around the edges”, working within and adapting to the limits that have been placed upon Tesla. Through grassroots volunteering, consumers may help the company continue to spread “the epiphany” to others, despite the onerous legal requirements placed upon it. In the following exchange from March 2014, TMC user richkae echoes lolachampcar’s call for assisting Tesla, but takes the idea a step further by suggesting consumers begin engaging more directly in sales activities. User Robert Boston responds by describing their experience assisting potential customers:

richkae: I think a much better idea if you want to do something - and you are in New Jersey or Texas or one of those states that has prevented Tesla from selling cars and can only have galleries, is to go hang around at the Tesla gallery and offer your assistance to customers. The law prevents [employees] from discussing pricing and assisting you with purchasing the car - but I am a happy owner and there is no law that prevents me from helping you. I'll help explain any pricing questions and show [them] how to order on the website.

Robert Boston: I've done this in Texas to good effect. First, I introduced myself to the store employees. They would then introduce me to potential buyers, and we'd talk turkey about pricing and options. Purely citizen to citizen, of course; I didn't benefit financially in any way. Just killing time at the Houston Galleria.

These consumers have gone beyond providing contact information to potential owners, as outlined by lolachampcar: they are actively engaged in sales functions, helping fill the gaps between what customers need and what Tesla employees are legally permitted to provide. In so

doing, this technologically-connected community of likeminded individuals does its part to reduce the influence of what it perceives as out-of-touch bureaucratic entities – governments and lobbying organizations – on their hero and mission. This boundary-crossing work thus aligns with the ideological elements – a populism-infused Californian Ideology – informing ideological coupling and heroizing work.

This cross-boundary work has also expanded to include activities largely unrelated to Tesla’s ongoing disputes with dealers, such as assisting with product deliveries. In September 2018, Tesla entered what Musk described on Twitter as “delivery logistics hell” as the company endeavored to deliver as many Model 3 vehicles as possible to reservation holders before the end of the third quarter. In response, Tesla consumers mobilized to provide assistance at showrooms across the country, where they volunteered to orient customers to their new vehicle and provide other logistical support. Like previous cross-boundary work, these efforts were motivated by a belief in the company’s overarching mission, as seen in the following quote by interview participant Shawn, describing his experiences volunteering at a Utah showroom:

When I went in to volunteer and told people about it afterward, they just couldn’t wrap their head around why you would ever do that. I did it because I think it’s a great product and a great company – it’s part of a larger concept and a larger mission that I actually believe in, regardless of if they’re a company that’s out to make money. If they succeed, in a way, it’ll steer the world into a better place...I don’t want the company to fail, because of the larger issues they’re trying to promote, and I felt this was a tiny way of helping to keep this company afloat.

Shawn connects Tesla's success or failure to a broader vision of the world's future, and given the company's precarious position as a fledgling automaker, he feels it necessary to take on responsibilities not traditionally given to consumers. In this way, the boundary-crossing work engaged in by consumers is tied to an ideologically-infused utopian vision – this connected community of individuals, mobilized via technology, is working to “steer the world into a better place” through their involvement with Tesla. Consumer involvement here goes well beyond ordinary brand support – such as purchasing a Tesla – or even brand evangelism, such as proactively spreading positive word-of-mouth about the company or recruiting others to the brand (Becerra and Badrinarayanan 2013). While these consumers also demonstrate such behaviours, their work transcends brand-level concerns. Here, “believers” are called to do their part for a broader, technologically-driven mission to achieve emancipation from an entrenched, corrupt system; this mission includes brand adoption and the recruitment of others to the cause, as well as various forms of political advocacy and cross-boundary institutional work aimed at supporting or dismantling certain field-level arrangements.

In its coordinated mobilization and active framing of goals and adversaries, consumer involvement here resembles a form of grassroots social movement, with consumers engaging in work on behalf of a brand. Literature examining the intersection of corporations and social movements has tended to view the two as antagonists contending with one another, though this body of work has recently begun expanding to investigate how movements may work within and in conjunction with, corporations (de Bakker, den Hond, King, and Weber 2013). Some of this recent work has specifically examined how consumers may be mobilized on behalf of firms (Walker and Rao 2014; see also Walker 2009, 2012, 2014). However, this work has focused largely on how and why firms employ grassroots lobbyists to “activate” consumers to advocate

on the firm's behalf. Such efforts employ intermediary organizations – such as the National Smokers' Alliance, created by a public relations firm on behalf of tobacco company Philip Morris, and used to mobilize smokers in response to anti-smoking legislation (Walker 2012) – to obscure the origins of the mobilization effort. By contrast, consumers working on behalf of Tesla in this space are largely self-mobilized, driven by their belief in the company's broader mission. When corporate efforts are made to activate consumers – as in the case of direct email campaigns aimed at encouraging consumers to contact their elected representatives on Tesla's behalf – these come in the form of direct appeals from the company – and often Elon Musk himself – rather than through intermediary organizations that would conceal the origin of the appeal. As evidenced in the consumer data presented thus far, the effectiveness of these appeals is tied to the resonance of the ideology the company has invoked, and the heroic figure it has created in Musk. Consumer involvement in this space thus represents a novel form of grassroots participation, conducted on behalf of both a brand and a larger mission.

Further, rather than fomenting a contestation between actor categories – as in Dolbec and Fischer (2015) – the cross-boundary institutional work engaged in by consumers here is welcomed by professionals who have been constrained in their duties. Furthermore, consumers here are not contented and incidentally contributing to supportive fieldwork, as in Dolbec and Fischer (2015); they are discontented, mobilized by a firm-led mission, and engaging in work both supportive of the firm – and the broader mission – and disruptive to the broader field in which the firm operates.

These heterodox forms of institutional work were direct responses to the orthodox work conducted by dealers' associations. As orthodox actors engaged in policing and deterrence aimed at solidifying the market doxa, this work demonstrated the artificiality of status quo

arrangements and created a space for heterodoxy to thrive – in response, groups of consumers became politically engaged and began conducting heterodox work. Tesla executives were aware of the potential marketing value that could be realized from these defensive orthodox efforts and the resulting heterodoxy, as seen in this quote from Diarmuid O’Connell, Vice President of Business Development at Tesla:

I’m advocating we treat it as a marketing expense because, frankly, it’s been a huge opportunity for us to get the word out and to help us sell cars. I don’t want to be drawn into these fights, but in some respects the dealers’ associations are doing us a big favor to the extent that we’re getting publicity and press, and people who have never heard of Tesla Motors are now hearing about us thanks to this effort. (Wilson 2013)

Dealers, for their part, were cognizant of Musk’s ability to mobilize consumer support, and began voicing concerns that Tesla’s model would also set an example for other competitors to follow, further undermining orthodox arrangements. This sentiment can be seen in the following quote from Peter Welch, NADA President and CEO:

(Musk) has got celebrity flair, and he has captured the minds of a lot of people through his products and his marketing. Everybody’s talking about it. It’s the buzz of the auto industry. We’re concerned about other upstarts that would come in, particularly maybe Chinese manufacturers that are looking for a simple way to do it. (Wilson 2013)

Here, Welch expresses concern not over Tesla or Musk, per say, but over what the company represents – a new form of thinking about how the market should be arranged – and how this manner of thinking may spread throughout the market. This echoes much of the orthodox

concern during this period, as dealers became adamant that Tesla be forced to abide by existing regulations, lest heterodoxy spread and provide other actors with new templates for action.

In the midst of this consumer-driven heterodox work, orthodox actors began realizing the need to adopt defensive tactics beyond policing and deterrence – in January 2014, incoming NADA Chairman Forrest McConnell identified promotion of the franchised dealer system as a top priority for the organization for the first time. Thus began a new phase of the orthodox/heterodox struggle, one that would see both sides engaging in ideological work aimed at implementing their vision of market arrangements. During this time, orthodox actors began coupling established practices with certain ideologies as a means of critiquing Tesla's heterodox practices and underlying ideologies. In doing so, these orthodox actors attempt to justify maintenance of the status quo and a return to the original doxa. As per Peter Welch's earlier concern, this period also saw a number of incumbent firms – including Volvo and Cadillac – adopt practices that mirrored elements of Tesla's approach.

5.3 The Ideological War: Competing Visions and New Templates

In 2014, the NADA began supplementing state-level regulatory appeals with appeals aimed at the broader public. As part of this initiative, the association revamped its communications strategy and hired a former political campaign consultant to head its Public Affairs department; strategic changes made during this time included increased consumer outreach through social media channels, the creation of consumer-facing websites and information sheets arguing the benefits of the franchised dealer system, and the in-house resumption of previously outsourced activities such as video production (Wilson 2017). In

contrast to earlier orthodox efforts aimed at influencing the regulatory environment, these appeals draw on specific ideologies – locality, American idealism and consumer advocacy – to make the case for status quo arrangements and position existing arrangements as natural and beyond reproach. The adoption of these new defensive tactics can be seen as a response to heterodox efforts; as orthodox practices came to be coupled with undesirable societal-level ideologies, and heterodox practices with resonant societal-level ideologies, orthodox actors came to realize a need to engage in similar ideological work aimed at defending the status quo. This interplay between disruptive and defensive work represents strategic contestation over the meanings underlying certain practices. In addition to engaging in ideological coupling of their own, dealers also began efforts at heroization, portraying themselves as “Everyday Heroes” who were vital to the health of local communities and advocated for the interests of middle class American consumers. I will now discuss each of the ideologies drawn on by orthodox actors in this space, with reference to the institutional work these ideologies inform.

5.3.1 Locality

Orthodox actors have worked to position franchised dealers as major contributors to communities across the U.S. In this formulation, localized concerns and impacts are privileged over global ones, and dealers are viewed as essential to the fabric of local communities, as illustrated in the following excerpt from a 2014 NADA advertisement:

With main street businesses across America consolidating, being bought out by big competitors or even going out of business, one main street employer remains as strong as ever: America’s new car and truck dealers. It’s one of the most competitive

businesses out there, and local dealers drive America. Here's why: new car and truck dealers are the backbone of local economies. They provide more than a million jobs nationwide in sales, service, and management. Good paying jobs that average more than \$53,000 per year plus benefits, and with room for advancement. And that's just the tip of the iceberg – dealers drive job creation in other businesses as well, from local broadcasting to construction to finance. Adding these jobs in related fields, local dealers are responsible for another million jobs nationwide. Dealers are also ground zero in America's tax base, generating more than 15% of state and local taxes, nationwide. Dealerships pay billions in property, sales, and income taxes that fund local schools, police, and fire departments. And dealerships are family businesses, too – over 90% of dealerships are privately-owned small businesses, some by families dating back generations. When you buy a car or truck, you're buying local, and that money stays in your community. These local dealers compete on pricing and financing, and provide extra accountability on warranty and recall issues, too, benefitting consumers and local communities everywhere. But some bureaucrats and interest groups want to weaken local dealers, replace dealerships with factory stores owned by far-off companies, which would make it harder to get car and truck loans. This is bad for consumers and will weaken local communities everywhere. Good paying, local jobs, strong communities, competition – the backbone of main street. America's local car and truck dealers drive America's economy, and that's a good deal for everyone.

Franchised auto dealers are portrayed as comprising the irreplaceable “backbone” of communities across the nation. Not only are they viewed as responsible for creating myriad jobs both within and outside the dealership, their positive impacts are linked to vital local services,

including education and law enforcement. And while other businesses have succumbed to consolidation or bankruptcy, leaving communities in the lurch, auto dealers are portrayed as a continuing, strong and vital contributor. “Far-off” companies – whose interests presumably do not include contributing to local schools or police departments – are portrayed as colluding with faceless bureaucrats and suspect “interest groups” to “weaken” these communities. In portraying orthodox arrangements in this way, the NADA couples their practices with an ideology that privileges local impacts over global ones, and constructs a heroic portrayal of auto dealers that serves as a contrast to the Randian archetype embodied by Elon Musk and other Silicon Valley visionaries. Where the Randian Hero is an individualist who defies tradition and is beholden to his or her singular vision, auto dealers are seen as adopting a communal outlook, respecting tradition, and working for the good of local populations. Dealers thus represent a sort of Everyday Hero, one that maintains a presence on “main street” to support the everyday people left behind by the forces of progress and global capitalism. This contrast is further explicated in the following quote from interview participant Henry, an auto dealer and NADA member:

What I like about the franchise dealers is that they’re community-focused. Tesla takes your money to California, and God knows what they do with it. And if you need services, you have guys coming in from far away to service your car. Yes, they make fine products, but your local dealers give money to the baseball teams, and the Red Cross, and they do things throughout the community, and Tesla does none of that. Tesla spends most of their money on lobbying efforts to get their model in place.

Tesla is seen here as disregarding local needs in favour of taking consumers’ money “to California” for unknown, potentially suspect purposes. California, with its Silicon Valley entrepreneurs working to further their tech-driven projects, acts as an ideological foil, removing

money that could otherwise be used to strengthen local communities. Here, Tesla, rather than franchised dealers, are viewed as pursuing crass self-interest to the detriment of ordinary consumers. Status quo arrangements are defended through appeals to sustain local communities; this focus on, and privileging of, local impacts and concerns contrasts with the nature of Tesla's efforts, which are seen as weakening these communities to benefit distant elites.

5.3.2 American Idealism

In working to defend status quo arrangements, actors in this space also draw on elements of American idealism. Where consumers drew on patriotic American ideology to call for market change, dealers make the case for orthodoxy by suggesting that they play a central role in helping the nation's everyday citizens pursue the American dream. This is illustrated in the following quote by NADA President and CEO Peter Welch, excerpted from material presented at the association's annual conference in January 2017:

It all started with a bill before congress, a few good men, and one voice. In early 1917, congress was on the verge of declaring the automobile a luxury good, and imposing a 5% luxury tax on that purchase. In response, a group of 30 auto dealers travelled to Washington to let their officials know that the automobile was not a toy of the rich, but a life-enhancing tool for average Americans. Those dealers, advocating on behalf of their customers, let congress know that the automobile was a revolutionary transportation innovation, and that it had become a necessity – and thanks to Henry Ford, and affordable one. The automobile has enabled past, current, and future generations to fulfill the American dream: live where you want to live, go where you

want to go. With that one voice, with that one moment in history, NADA was born, and 100 years later, we're still taking care of the transportation needs of our customers.

Welch invokes an origin myth (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006) to justify the association's – and by extension, franchised dealers' – existence, and connects this myth to a broader project working in service of the “American dream”. The prescience of these “few good men”, working on behalf of “average American” consumers, was able to prevent the implementation of government policy perceived to be a threat to essential American values of freedom of movement, and this advocacy continues currently. At the core of this origin myth is a group of individuals who banded together to speak with one voice and advocate for the collective interest; this dynamic contrasts with the work of the fiercely independent Randian Heroes of Silicon Valley, who doggedly pursue their own individual goals for their own ends. The NADA and its members are thus once again portrayed as a collective of Everyday Heroes. The role of dealers in ensuring the success of this American project is further explicated in the following quote, excerpted from a January 2017 article written for Automotive News by U.S. congressional representatives Fred Upton and John Dingell in celebration of the NADA's 100th anniversary:

We know today that cars and trucks are not luxury items for most Americans, but in fact are economic necessities. An affordable vehicle is indisputably an essential building block of economic sustainability for individuals and families. Vehicle ownership increases the chances that folks can find and keep a job and locate more cost-effective housing options. Moreover, if an unexpected job loss occurs, having a car can be the critical factor in making a successful transition to a new opportunity in another part of the country. The affordable automobile has provided freedom of mobility for several generations of Americans during the last century. America's

franchised dealers are the bridge between consumers and the auto manufacturers. The dealers match supply and demand in their respective markets continuously, and the benefits of that collective market force are impressive. The franchised dealer network provides a competitive market for consumers, more than 1 million jobs on Main Streets across America, tax revenue for local and state governments, and greater shareholder and brand value for the vehicle manufacturers. In Michigan, we have hundreds of successful, trusted dealers who are part of the very fabric of our communities.

These authors assert that dealers provide “essential building blocks” and freedom of mobility for families, the benefits of which are extended to include employment and housing. Implicit in this is a rebuke against Tesla and the Silicon Valley digerati, the technocratic elite who seek to transform society through technology; unlike Tesla’s luxury vehicles, most cars and trucks are “economic necessities” for the Main Street “folks” who may undergo “unexpected job loss” or need to find “cost-effective housing options”. As such, dealers are seen to have a responsibility for providing these vehicles at the lowest possible price. This perspective provides a critique of the Californian Ideology and the digerati, whose quest to transform society through technological innovation would leave behind those citizens who either cannot afford or cannot understand the latest technologies. According to the ideology of American Idealism, it is these everyday “folks” who embody the American spirit and make the country great; thus, it becomes imperative to ensure they are well-served by market arrangements. Here, dealers are seen to act in service of a broader American project through their bridging of consumers and manufacturers; while the technological determinism of the Californian Ideology posits that such intermediation obstructs the efficient trajectory to a better world, the ideology of American idealism suggests that these Everyday Heroes are exactly the bridge needed to resist impersonal market forces and counter

the digerati who would see the benefits of technology reaped by an elite few.

5.3.3 Consumer Advocacy

In defending the franchised dealer system, dealers position themselves as playing an important role protecting the interests of consumers. Where Tesla-inspired consumers portrayed dealers as paternalistic, obsolete intermediaries as part of a call for market change, dealers work to defend orthodoxy by insisting that their expertise is required. At the level of the individual transaction, this advocacy hinges on the apparent significance of automobile purchases. These purchases are portrayed as large and difficult, as illustrated in the following excerpt from an NADA information sheet released in June 2014:

To protect consumers, all states regulate important retail industries. This includes everything from eyewear to insurance to the automobile, which is often the second biggest purchase a consumer will make in his or her lifetime (after a home). Unlike other products, automobiles are massive purchases that require licensing and insurance to operate, usually require third party financing, and even contain some hazardous materials. Some states allow automakers to sell directly to consumers while others require local franchises to sell them. Most states agree the public is best served when multiple retailers fiercely compete for business and make the highly complex and regulated transaction easy for consumers.

The practice of purchasing an automobile is portrayed as complex and monetarily significant, and the products as potentially dangerous. Government regulation in the space adds further complexity. Owing to the complicated nature of the transaction, dealers – who ostensibly possess

expertise in these areas – are seen as indispensable resources for consumers. Underlying this perspective is an assumption that consumers are incapable of navigating this process alone and are thus in need of protection provided by dealers. This contrasts with the ideology underlying Tesla’s direct approach to distribution, whereby consumers are viewed as individually self-sufficient, capable of conducting their own research, arranging their own insurance, licensing, and finance, and ultimately making this significant purchase without expert assistance. The “fierce” competition between dealers – made possible through the intermediated franchise model – is further credited with helping to keep the marketplace safe and accessible. The protection afforded by dealers goes beyond individual transactions to include advocacy at the field level, as seen in the following quote from NADA Chairman Wes Lutz, excerpted from an interview given at the organization’s 2018 conference:

We’re becoming advocates for the consumer, which is something kind of new, that, when I started in the business 40 years ago, we really didn’t do – we were focused on our business. But we’re getting feedback from consumers that the people making the decisions really aren’t hearing, for some reason. There’s a disconnect between what my customers are saying they want, and what the government wants them to have, or what Silicon Valley wants them to have. And I find we’re having an increasing role of advocacy, because somebody’s gotta step up and say ‘nobody’s asking for those things, nobody wants those things’. I don’t know why we’re talking about electrification; I, personally, am excited about it, but I don’t have anyone asking for it. And the government, it seems to be a really big issue – we’ve gotta make sure we’re providing products that consumers want. We have a lot of small cars on our lot right now, we

don't have anyone to buy them. Somebody's gotta speak on behalf of the consumer, and I think we're playing an increasing role in that.

Dealers are viewed here as the champions of everyday people who are being subjugated by government and Silicon Valley elites. Where these elites would seek to dictate consumer needs from on high in pursuit of their own agendas – providing products that “nobody wants” and “nobody’s asking for” – intermediaries are viewed as providing a voice to consumers whose needs are going unmet. This perspective on collective advocacy on behalf of others contrasts with the Californian Ideology, whereby individual consumers are empowered by technology to advocate on their own behalf. Here, dealers portray themselves as Everyday Heroes working to collectively protect the interests of regular citizens who may otherwise be neglected by the digerati. The naivety of these digital elites is further explicated in this excerpt from a NADA white paper published in June 2014, discussing why previous attempts at disintermediation failed in the 1990s and 2000s:

Silicon Valley entrepreneurs then (and perhaps even now) do not relate to the car buying experience of the vast majority of Americans who cannot simply write a check for their cars. These early ventures, and even more recent ones, focused on selecting a car online and then buying it at a price that presumed to reflect the savings wrenched out of system efficiencies. These business models failed because of the naiveté of the founders in their understanding of the economics and complexity of the vehicle distribution system, the needs of the consumers in car buying process, and the mutual dependence of automakers and dealers. Vehicles must be experienced prior to purchase for most shoppers. And no one bothered to figure what to do online with a seven year old, 80,000 mile trade-in that was part of the down payment for the new car.

Prior failed attempts by the digerati to overturn established distribution arrangements are attributed to these elites' naivety and detachment from the everyday reality of ordinary consumers who do not have the means to "simply write a check for their cars". These ordinary consumers are instead in need of an advocate – franchised dealers – to act as a guide through the complex purchase and financing process, as well as provide an opportunity for consumers to experience the product before making what is, for them, if not for the digerati, a very significant financial commitment.

In responding to heterodox efforts to couple orthodox field-level arrangements with undesirable societal-level ideologies, dealers and their associations have thus worked to couple these arrangements with more positive, culturally-resonant ideologies. In doing so, they have constructed their own heroic archetype – the Everyday Hero – to contrast with the Randian Hero exemplified by Elon Musk and Tesla. This archetype is invoked not just by marketers; it also provides rhetorical ammunition for use by other actors – including those in the public sector – to come to the defense of orthodox arrangements. Orthodox actors have also inverted an ideological positioning employed by Tesla and its supporters – whereas Tesla and these supporters work to portray dealers as part of a corrupt, elite bureaucracy, dealers portray Tesla and Musk as digital elites intent on imposing their will on the market at the expense of ordinary consumers. This concern for everyday "folks" and local communities left behind by global market elites reflects the populist narrative evoked by a swath of successful politicians, including President Donald Trump. Thus, both orthodox and heterodox actors invoke elements of culturally-resonant, anti-elitist, populist ideology in discussing their activities. Here again, distribution arrangements possess ideological qualities that go beyond functional concerns – intermediaries are seen not just as fulfilling economic objectives, but as contributing to broader projects that privilege

specific beliefs around locality, American idealism, and consumer advocacy. Defensive work also involves drawing on history to portray existing arrangements as natural and beyond reproach; this work is aimed at restoring the naturalized, previously taken-for-granted nature of status quo arrangements. These efforts exist in conjunction with ongoing policing and deterrence efforts aimed at shoring up regulatory support at the state level.

5.4 New Templates and Market Change

Just as Tesla's market entry demonstrated the possibility of alternative arrangements and awakened a political and ideological consciousness in different market actors, so too did it provide a template for action from which firms could draw. Ongoing orthodox/heterodox struggle thus had the effect of opening a Pandora's box, such that market incumbents and new entrants alike began adopting elements of Tesla's approach to distribution and sales. In 2014, incumbent automakers began entering the fray, claiming that existing rules protecting dealers were too strict, and that the Tesla-only exemptions carved out in some states were unfair. Gloria Bergquist, spokeswoman for Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, which represents 12 automakers – but not Tesla – illustrates this critique in the following quote:

At the request of local dealer groups, states set up a labyrinth of protectionist laws that make the car-buying experience difficult and costly for our customers. It's understandable why Tesla or future competitors would want a simpler sales process.

When we look at the big picture, we may be at a tipping point. If dealer groups continue their push for more onerous franchise laws, we will be forced to keep an open mind about how best to serve new-car buyers in the future. (Wilson 2014)

In criticizing orthodox arrangements, Bergquist sympathizes with Tesla's desire for a heterodox approach to distribution. She implicitly threatens that incumbents will begin adopting a similar approach for themselves, should orthodox attempts at strengthening the doxa continue. In this way, the spread of heterodoxy can be seen as contributing to broader market change.

Throughout 2014, automakers – including Porsche, Cadillac, and Volvo – began experimenting with retail formats that more closely mirrored the experience offered by Tesla, such that many of the tasks traditionally conducted by dealers – including lead generating and test-driving – became the domain of manufacturers (Colias 2014; Kurylko 2014). While incumbent automakers were still bound by law to their franchise agreements and remained unable to sell directly to consumers, these experiments represent attempts to push the boundaries of those agreements in ways that align with Tesla's heterodox approach to the market.

By 2015, dealership groups – including AutoNation and Sonic Automotive, two of the largest in the U.S. – had also begun experimenting with new models that adopted many of the practices employed by Tesla, including no-haggle pricing and online ordering (Wilson 2015). Underlying this shift was pressure to keep up with a changing marketplace and provide increased transparency, as seen in the following quote from Scott Smith, president of Sonic Automotive:

If dealers don't change and become more transparent and give the power to our customers, those dealers who refuse to change will go away. They're going to lose market share, and eventually they'll be gone. (Wilson 2015)

Articulating a criticism commonly levelled against dealers – that their opaque machinations obstruct a clear path between customer and manufacturer – Smith suggests that “the power” must

be returned to the people, echoing populist refrains invoked in support of Tesla's heterodox struggle.

Meanwhile, incumbent automaker Hyundai opted to adopt a direct distribution model with the November 2015 launch of its Genesis Motors division, which, outside of the U.S., sells directly to customers. In 2016, the adoption of a Tesla-like retail model widened, as Lexus introduced a fixed-price program, while Lincoln began opening "experience centers" reminiscent of Tesla stores (Bunkley 2016). By 2017, another new market entrant – Lynk & CO, a Chinese-Swedish manufacturer that aims to offer both ownership and subscription-based modes of purchase – had begun lobbying U.S. lawmakers with the aim of acquiring an allowance to distribute its vehicles directly to consumers via online sales and offline boutique stores (Ilf and Silke Carty, 2017).

Chapter 6

Discussion and Conclusion

Employing Bourdieu's notion of doxa, I have examined how the introduction of new market practices – premised on a novel, culturally-resonant ideology – can serve to disrupt markets where existing practices have become entrenched and largely taken-for-granted. In outlining this disruption and the mechanisms of change arising from it, I contribute to our knowledge of market-based institutional work and strategic market change, while providing a novel theorization of the practice of distribution.

6.1 Doxic Markets: Institutional Work and Change

With my research, I develop an account of the novel, ideologically-driven institutional work arising from the disruption of taken-for-granted, status quo practices. In so doing, I extend theorization around the role of ideology in facilitating institutional work and market disruption. As societal-level sets of beliefs and values, ideologies rise and fall in prominence over time (Wright and Zammuto 2013; Zilber 2006), becoming more or less culturally-resonant. These dynamics create opportunities for change at the market and practice levels, particularly in markets where practices and ideologies have become decoupled, over time.

In my context, automotive distribution practices had remained largely unchanged for decades. Over time, these practices became decoupled from their underlying ideologies – ideologies that came to prominence in the mid-1900s and held up intermediaries as a key part of a national industrial project (Alderson 1965; Mazur 1964). The field was disrupted by the arrival of a new market entrant whose practices invoked different ideologies – populism,

environmentalism, and techno-determinism – that resonate strongly in modern culture (Bröning 2016; Shear 2011; Steffan 2009; Swanson 2017; Turner 2006). The role of populist rhetoric is of particular note, given its prominent usage by market actors on both sides of the conflict, and the global resurgence in popularity currently enjoyed by populist ideology (Inglehart and Norris 2016). In accounting for the societal level of analysis and the role of shifting, culturally-resonant ideologies, my research reveals novel market dynamics and forms of ideologically-driven institutional work.

In my context, Tesla’s early rhetoric employed many of the same functional justifications for its disintermediated approach as earlier challengers had, and the company was met with resistance from auto dealers and their associations, in much the same way previous change attempts had. In response, Tesla and Musk began adopting more ideologically-driven rhetoric, invoking culturally-resonant ideologies and portraying incumbents as ideologically out-of-touch. This evolution from functional justification to ideological play served to inspire novel forms of consumer-based work that, in turn, helped sustain the company’s challenge to existing arrangements. Doxic market conditions thus introduced the need for different kinds of institutional work aimed at affecting market change.

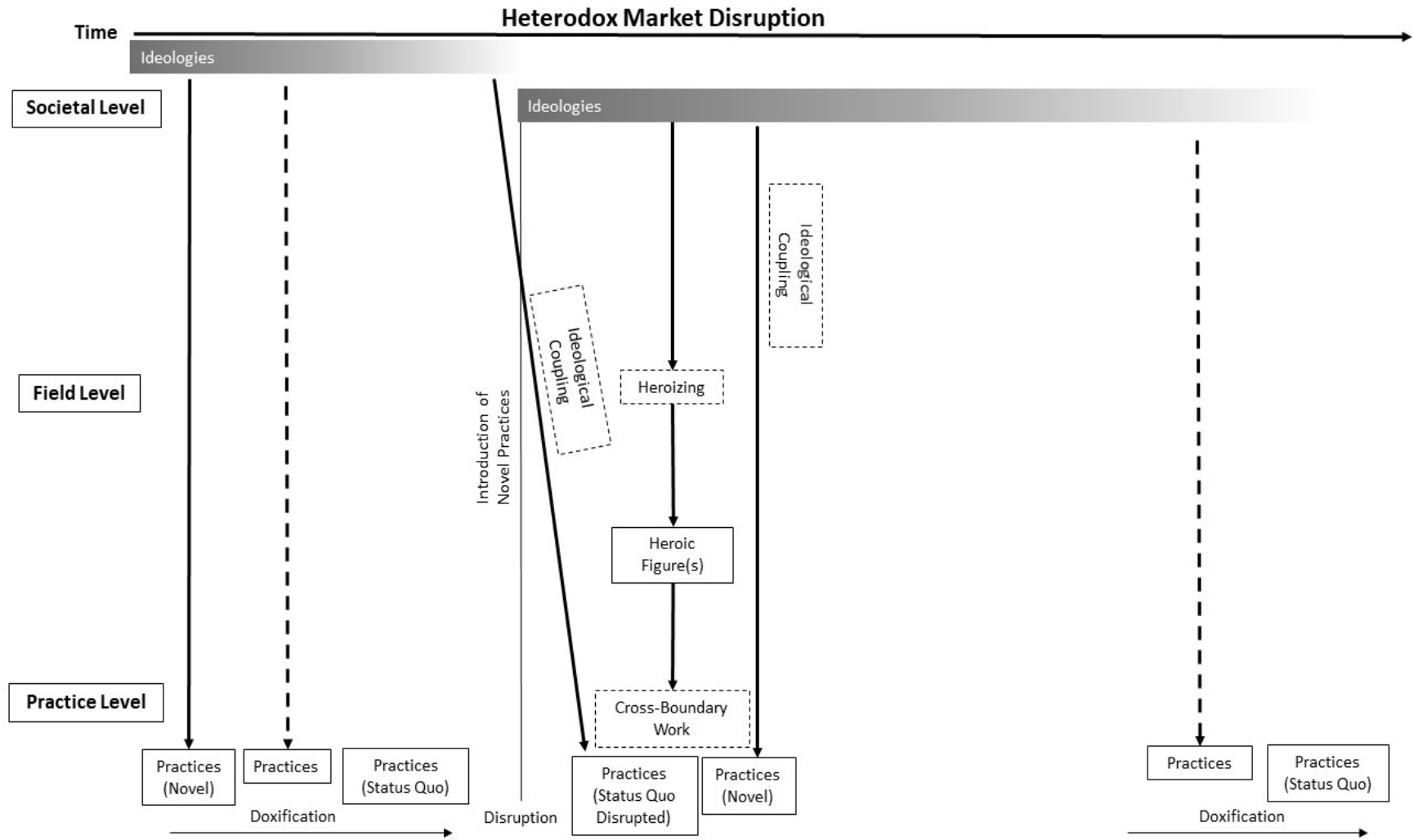
In my findings, heterodox actors worked to reject orthodox interpretations of the marketplace and instead promote their own interpretations, thus sustaining the heterodox challenge in the face of orthodox institutional work aimed at restoring the doxa. This was accomplished by coupling heterodox practices with a culturally-resonant ideology, which served as a mobilizing force and drove consumers to engage in heterodox work in response to orthodox efforts. This mobilization was made possible through Tesla and Musk’s success in “counterposing a paradoxical pre-vision, a utopia, a project or programme, to the ordinary vision

which apprehends the social world as a natural world” (Bourdieu 1991, p. 128); in other words, consumers’ involvement was an outgrowth of their belief in the heterodox, ideologically-driven vision of the future promoted by Tesla and Musk, reflected in the cultural resonance of the ideology underlying the company’s approach to distribution. By contrast, status quo arrangements – and, concomitantly, auto dealers and their associations – were viewed as reflecting retrograde ideologies and representing impediments to the heterodox vision. In this way, incumbents were revealed to be culturally out of step with modern society, their defensive efforts grounded in outdated and dissonant ideologies. Breaking the market doxa and sustaining disruption thus required the introduction of both a novel practice – the use of manufacturer-owned showrooms – and a novel ideology – a populism-infused Californian Ideology. Thus, while disruption was initially sparked by the introduction of novel practice, it was made possible by institutional work that invoked a culturally-resonant ideology. The boundary-spanning, ideological nature of this work is made further apparent in the accounts of consumers like interview participant Shawn, who worked to support Tesla in areas unrelated to the company’s ongoing distribution difficulties. This purposeful work was thus driven not simply by a struggle over the organizing principles of any one field, but by adherence to an overarching ideological vision and the alignment of that vision between consumer and marketer. In transcending the field level in this way, the work conducted by consumers, like the work conducted by the heroic Musk across multiple fields, goes beyond field-focused institutional entrepreneurship.

Tesla’s disruptive actions in this market also served as a template from which other market actors drew. Both incumbent and new entrant automakers, as well as dealership groups, began, within the scope of their capabilities, to adopt aspects of Tesla’s heterodox approach to distribution, while employing rhetoric decrying orthodox attempts at maintaining the status quo.

In the aggregate, the adoption of these heterodox practices represents a change in the market, as once-prominent distribution practices are modified or abandoned wholesale, and channel arrangements are altered. Should this wider adoption of heterodox practices continue, what was once perceived as heretical may become the new normal, and over time, previously novel practices may become taken for granted as “the way things are”, just as intermediated franchise distribution did in the 20th century. In this way, periods of market change – catalyzed by a disruption of doxa – can be seen as occurring in between processes of doxification, as different societal-level ideologies wax and wane in resonance, and practices become decoupled and recoupled to these ideologies (see Figure 6.1). My research has focused on developing an account of the institutional work aimed at realizing certain sets of market arrangements in the wake of such disruption. In identifying three forms of this work, I contribute to our understanding of market system dynamics.

Figure 6.1: Model of Findings



6.2 Ideological Coupling

First, I show how heterodox and orthodox actors strategically coupled theirs and each other's practices with resonant ideologies as a means of justifying specific market arrangements and mobilizing support from others. A somewhat similar dynamic presents in Giesler's (2008) examination of music downloading practices, where downloaders navigate the tension between ideologies of possessive individualism and social utilitarianism as they attempt to justify their practices. However, Giesler's (2008) focus rests largely on consumers' disruptive use of ideology; the defensive techniques employed by marketers in that context are largely functional in nature. By contrast, I show how both consumers and marketers draw on opposing and shared ideological perspectives to defend and disrupt existing arrangements.

More broadly, the practice of ideological coupling may be contrasted with that of framing, which has received attention in the marketing literature in recent years (Humphreys 2010a, 2010b; Humphreys and Latour 2013; Humphreys and Thompson 2014). Framing is a process through which actors ascribe meaning to, and develop understandings of, their social reality (Weick 1995). At an individual level, frames are "cognitive structures...that orient and guide interpretation of individual experiences" (Oliver and Johnston 2000, p. 41). Framing also occurs at the organizational and field levels, as actors strategically employ different frames in an effort to mobilize support and contest and shape social arrangements (Benford and Snow 2000; Fligstein and McAdam 2011). Framing and ideological coupling both involve rhetorically drawing purposeful connections between ideas and practices, and both may be aimed at mobilizing support for change projects.

However, ideological coupling refers to a specific process arising from the disruption of doxic markets. In such markets, where practices and their underlying ideology have become gradually decoupled from one another, an opportunity arises; a new market entrant armed with novel practices and a resonant ideology may work to couple status quo practices with outdated ideological perspectives as a means of justifying change. This work may be particularly effective in instances when, as in my context, incumbents fail to respond to the initial disruption with ideological arguments of their own, creating a vacuum that can be filled with heterodox rhetoric. Over time, incumbents may realize the need for engaging in similar work and begin engaging in coupling of their own, working to positively connect status quo practices with more resonant ideologies.

Thus, ideological coupling arises from circumstances where connections between meaning and practice have become loosened, over time. It is work made possible through ideological shifts at the societal level, which provide strategic market openings for entrants with fresh perspectives. To consider ideological coupling as simply a case of framing is to obscure the importance of these ideological dynamics.

6.3 Heroizing

The second type of institutional work I identify involves heterodox and orthodox actors constructing heroic figures as a means of promoting or defending against change. Prior literature has examined the role of such “hero models” in informing everyday consumption practices (Holt and Thompson 2004) and contributing to market evolution processes (Giesler 2008). This literature has focused largely on consumers’ self-construction, whereby individuals imbue their

own practices with heroic idealism. While marketers and consumers in my context both engage in similar self-construction, crafting heroic models that align with certain ideological perspectives, my research also demonstrates the extension of heroic construction beyond the self. Through the crafting of a marketer – Elon Musk – as a heroic figure, market actors created a concrete, singular figurehead around which support could be rallied. Thus, heroization in my context represents more than an abstract vehicle through which consumption patterns may be understood; it also comprises the development of a tangible figure who serves as the basis for calls to action aimed at realizing certain market arrangements. For actors in my research, change-focused action is thus directed not by a sense of heroic self-identity, per say, but by an external figure invoking a culturally-resonant ideology that aligns with one's own. Such a hero was present in Giesler's (2008) examination of the music industry in the form of Shawn Fanning, creator of the music-sharing software Napster. However, Giesler's (2008) analysis of Fanning's involvement is limited to his role in setting the "foundation myth" (p. 744) underlying consumer downloading practices; given the focus of this work, it does not account for the ongoing construction of Fanning as a hero, or for his ongoing work to mobilize consumer support, a central aspect of the heroizing institutional work I describe.

These heroes play a central role in crafting ideological appeals that mobilize support for particular market change projects; this field-level work involves blending together elements of culturally-resonant ideologies and engaging in ideological coupling aimed at motivating change-focused action from on-the-ground participants. In this way, their work mirrors that of social movement leaders who function as "ideological and cultural innovators" (West 2008, p. 139); these leaders rally other actors to participate in social causes in various fields through their ability to craft a "public narrative" that appeals to different values and beliefs about how the

world is and should be (Ganz 2010, p. 540). In my context, Musk represents such a heroic leader, capable of drawing together various ideological strands to create a resonant message and motivate change-driven action in favour of his goals. Importantly, the hero's identity is inextricably linked to the ideology underlying the arrangements he seeks to implement – a belief in the power of technology to improve conditions, the importance of environmental stewardship, and the supremacy of direct connections between people – and this alignment between a “true believer” figurehead and the change project he seeks to enact provides added credibility to the endeavor.

In outlining this heroization work, I extend prior theorization around marketplace moralism and market-based social movements. In framing auto dealers and their allies as entrenched, corrupt forces to be vanquished, Tesla, Musk, and consumer supporters draw on societal-level ideologies to imbue their practices with moralistic dynamism, positioning themselves as moral protagonists (Luedicke, Thompson, and Giesler 2014). For their part, auto dealers and their associations engage in a similar dynamic, positioning themselves as Everyday Heroes who counter the detached digerati to support local communities and ordinary people. However, this moralism is not used to critique mainstream consumer culture or highlight ideological differences between consumer groups (e.g. Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Luedicke, Thompson, and Giesler 2014; Thompson and Arsel 2004), but to motivate institutional work aimed at dismantling or protecting the entrenched status quo. In this way, my findings extend our understanding of marketplace moralism; while the extant literature has focused on consumer moralism and its implications for identity projects, I show how groups of consumers and marketers dynamically cast one another as moral protagonists and antagonists in an effort to mobilize support from other market actors, and inform practical work focused on realizing

certain sets of market arrangements. The moralism in my findings is thus differently-focused and practiced by a broader range of market actors.

From a social movement perspective, market heroes like Musk can be seen as spanning the levels of society and practice, drawing down societal ideologies to inform market practices in the service of a broader field-level change project. While individual consumers can and do engage in similar work, understanding marketer involvement in heroization is particularly important, both because these dynamics are understudied relative to consumer-driven moralism and because marketers, owing to their platforms, may have substantially more opportunity to amplify and extend their ideological perspectives – thus functioning as de-facto movement leaders who are able to mobilize grassroots participation – than do consumers. My work contributes to our understanding of this dynamic, taking theorization around marketplace heroes beyond the realm of identity play.

In outlining how heroic market leaders invoke culturally-resonant ideologies to spark consumer mobilization, I also extend our knowledge of cultural branding (Ertimur and Coskuner-Balli 2015; Giesler 2012; Holt 2004; Holt and Cameron 2010; Humphreys and Thompson 2014; Thompson, Rindfleisch, and Arsel 2006). The cultural branding perspective holds that brands succeed when they embody myths that resonate in the ideological climate of the time (Holt and Cameron 2010). Prior research has shown how cultural branding may be strategically employed in processes of market creation to combat doppelganger brand images (Giesler 2012) or to maintain status quo practices in response to disruptive events (Humphreys and Thompson 2014). Each of these dynamics can be seen in my work, as orthodox actors drew on ideologies in an effort to maintain the status quo and reframe their image, thus combatting the doppelganger image being forwarded by heterodox actors. However, my work also demonstrates

the capacity for cultural branding to serve as a destabilizing and mobilizing force when paired with heterodox practices and embodied in a heroic figurehead. In showing how the introduction of novel distribution practices and mythic branding narratives – both drawing on the same culturally-resonant ideology – served to disrupt a longstanding status quo, my work illustrates the potential for proactive cultural branding to motivate disruptive institutional work when practiced by a well-aligned heroic figure.

6.4 Cross-Boundary Work

The third type of institutional work I identify involves actors responding to ongoing market developments by engaging in work that crosses the boundary between actor categories. Prior literature examining marketplace boundary work has illustrated conflict dynamics arising from the overlap between consumer and professional categories (Dolbec and Fischer 2015). However, in contrast to the incidental maintenance work being conducted by contented consumers in Dolbec and Fischer (2015), the cross-boundary work conducted in my context is an ideologically-driven, strategic response by highly-engaged consumers working in service of a disruptive marketer-led project.

In demonstrating how marketers have worked to mobilize consumers to engage in this cross-boundary work on behalf of the firm, I make a novel contribution to the literature on market-based social movements. Previous marketing literature has illustrated how grassroots consumer movements may combat mainstream market practices (Kozinets and Handelman 2004), carve out market niches apart from corporate incumbents (Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007), and promote alternative taste structures and logics of competition (Kjeldgaard,

Askegaard, Rasmussen, and Østergaard 2016). When corporate involvement is invoked in this literature, it has tended to be in opposition to movements. Elsewhere, Walker (2009; 2012; 2014; and Rao 2014) have explored how corporations work to surreptitiously create the impression of public support for their endeavours; while this stream of research situates movements and corporations as ostensible allies, any actual cooperation between the two groups is either illusory or conducted under false pretense. By contrast, I show how authentic, movement-like consumer participation arises out of a marketer-led project. In crafting a blended, resonant ideology and combining this with a heroic figure, marketers were able to mobilize consumer support for a heterodox market project. This constitutes a novel, brand-based form of consumer movement; in adopting activist tactics and assuming professional duties, consumers became involved with brands in ways that go beyond loyalty or evangelism (Becerra and Badrinarayanan 2013).

6.5 Ideology, Distribution, and Market Dynamics

In my examination of ideologically-infused work in the context of automobile distribution, I make a novel contribution to a subject area historically dominated by functional concerns. While justifications for certain channel arrangements have long employed ideology (Alderson 1965; Mazur 1964), the extant channels literature has conceptualized modes of channel distribution primarily as logistical conduits, and has thus focused on questions of technical efficiency and relationship management. The role of power in shaping channel dynamics has also been explored in this literature (e.g. Beier and Stern 1969; El-Ansary and Stern 1972; Gaski 1984; Hunt and Nevin 1974), with a focus on understanding how firms in dyadic relationships exercise influence over one another. In this relational, interfirm view, power

stems from firms' level of interdependence within a channel, as well as their "need to maintain the channel relationship to achieve desired goals" (Frazier 1999, p. 227). By contrast, I demonstrate that channel arrangements also represent enactments of certain ideologies, and that these enactments are subject to contestation by a variety of actors outside a given distribution channel. In outlining this work, I illustrate the importance of attention to the sociocultural dynamics of distribution systems.

I show how certain ideologies that privileged the role of intermediaries were inscribed in distribution practices in the automotive sector. These ideologies reflected the prevailing societal values of the time: American expansionism and the supremacy of the capitalist economic system over its communist counterpart. Notions of freedom, progress, and growth were intertwined with the practices of intermediaries, and these practices became enshrined in norm and law, reflecting their broader importance. In this way, decisions about how products and services reach consumers – decisions often conceptualized from a purely functional perspective – become laden with ideology. However, as prevailing societal values shift, these ideologies and their related practices may fall out of fashion; in such circumstances, market actors may need to either adopt new practices or justify their existing practices with a more resonant ideology. In response to heterodox disruption and ideological play, orthodox actors in my research realized the need to go beyond functional, regulatory defensive techniques and justify their practices with ideologies that resonated more strongly in the current cultural climate. Rather than defend the need for intermediaries in the channel via appeals to broader capitalist expansion – as had been done when intermediated distribution arrangements were solidified in the mid-19th century – orthodox actors drew on notions of American idealism, populism, and localism. Thus, despite advocating for the same market structure that had been entrenched for decades, these actors adopted a new

ideological blend to make their case. Here, the power to enact certain channel and market arrangements is not structurally determined through resource allocations or intra-channel relational dynamics, but is a culturally-constituted product arising from market actors' ideological adeptness. This conceptualization of power stands in contrast to those typically employed in the channels literature, aligning more closely with other post-structuralist accounts (Bourdieu 1984; 1989; and Thompson 1991).

Just as orthodox actors relied primarily on functional and regulatory arguments in the early stages, so too did heterodox justification for change initially hinge on functional considerations. However, after this initial foray was met with orthodox pushback, Musk shifted tactics and began employing increasingly ideological rhetoric that had the effect of revealing and critiquing the ideology underlying status quo market arrangements. Because this shift was premised on a blended ideology that resonated culturally, it had the effect of mobilizing consumers on behalf of heterodoxy. In outlining this process, I contribute to our knowledge of market system dynamics, showing how disruptive and defensive market actors adopt different strategic tactics – functional and ideological – in the wake of market disruption.

In developing an account of the institutional work arising from doxic market disruption, I also make a novel contribution to our understanding of competitive dynamics. Previous literature in this domain has explored how firms' order of entry affects competitive advantage (Golder and Tellis 1993; Lieberman and Montgomery 1988; Robinson 1988; Robinson and Fornell 1985; Shankar, Carpenter, and Krishnamurthi 1998) and innovative capability (Chandy and Tellis 2000; Christensen 1997; Ghemawat 1991; Henderson and Clark 1990). From this resource-based view, incumbents may achieve advantage by erecting barriers to entry, such as economies of scale (Robinson and Fornell 1985; Urban, Carter, Gaskin, and Mucha 1986), and may

successfully innovate by building their technological capabilities (Chandy and Tellis 2000). New entrants looking to achieve competitive advantage may utilize previously-developed technological advances or introduce products with superior attributes (Lieberman and Montgomery 1988), while taking advantage of relationships with larger firms that possess greater resources (Chandy and Tellis 2000). Taken together, this literature has identified many viable strategies for incumbents and new entrants. However, given its resource-based view of competitive advantage, it has tended to focus on the technical characteristics of firms and their markets; thus, it has little to say about the ways in which firms may leverage cultural dynamics to attain advantage.

In identifying novel forms of market-shaping institutional work arising from the disruption of a doxic market, my work illustrates the strategic importance of marketers' attention to societal-level ideological dynamics, and it has implications for both incumbents and new entrants seeking to achieve competitive advantage. Just as incumbents are prone to a "technological inertia" that prevents them from realizing new technological opportunities, owing to their resource investments in an established market (Ghemawat 1991, p. 161), so too may they develop an ideological inertia that prevents them from realizing the need for more ideologically-resonant market offerings, owing to the disconnect between ideology and taken-for-granted practices in a doxic market context. This creates an opportunity for other firms to spark disruption by introducing offerings that resonate more strongly in the cultural climate of the time, and to motivate the kinds of institutional work witnessed in my research. Thus, just as new market entrants may disrupt an established market with a technically-superior product, so too may they spark disruption by introducing an ideologically-superior product. In this way, the competitive advantages accruing to incumbents or new entrants is not determined by firms'

resource allocations or the relational structure of the market, but emerges through marketers' adeptness at identifying and leveraging broader ideological dynamics.

6.6 Limitations and Future Research

Given my research focus on dynamics arising from the disruption of doxic markets, I have necessarily examined a context in which market arrangements had become rigidly institutionalized, where practices had become taken for granted, and where the ideology underlying those practices had fallen out of favour, over time. However, many markets are home to a higher degree of dynamism than was historically present in my context – in these markets, ongoing contestation and innovation may prevent any one set of arrangements from becoming entrenched, and thus prevent the establishment of a market doxa. My findings are most relevant to contexts characterized by substantial barriers to entry – such as significant capital requirements or high degrees of regulatory oversight – as these conditions shield incumbents, allowing their associated practices to become more firmly entrenched and thus facilitating the formation of market doxa. In my context, automobile dealers and their associations had enjoyed a relatively protected position for several decades; accordingly, they had little incentive to alter their practices or tap into prevailing ideological currents to justify the status quo. This provided a particularly ripe opportunity for a new entrant to disrupt the market with new practices, premised on an ideology that enjoyed greater cultural prominence than that underlying status quo practices. While ideological coupling arises specifically from the disruption of doxic markets, the other forms of market-based institutional work I have identified – heroizing and cross-boundary work – likely also exist outside of doxic market contexts. However, this work may be more

effective within a doxic context. In doxic markets, ideologies and practices have greater opportunity to become outmoded and thus more susceptible to challengers whose institutional work invokes more resonant ideologies.

My research examines market dynamics occurring over a set period of time, covering Tesla's initial market entry and the ongoing disruption arising from that entry. However, the market remains in flux – the “silence of the doxa” has not been restored, nor has a new doxa taken form (Bourdieu 1991, p. 131). The ongoing volatility of this space and lack of a clear resolution gives rise to potential avenues for future research.

The first avenue concerns the potential adoption of alternative practices by either heterodox or orthodox actors. In my context, the market entrant has largely not deviated from its heterodox practices, and while some incumbents have begun experimenting with similar practices, most remain in the grips of orthodoxy. However, these trajectories may shift, giving rise to new dynamics. Throughout Tesla's history, Musk has remained mostly adamant about the supremacy of direct distribution; however, company executives have also hinted that the company may eventually employ a franchise dealer model, should the need arise. Such a move would seem to be misaligned with the ideology that has driven the company thus far, and could be seen by consumers as capitulating to the demands of orthodoxy. Thus, a research question arises: how might the ideologically-driven institutional work conducted by consumers be affected if a heretofore heterodox actor begins adopting orthodox practices, or vice versa? What forms of ideological play arise when practices that were previously thought to be ideologically-incompatible are brought into the fold?

A second potential avenue of research concerns the ongoing work of heroizing. In my context, Elon Musk was constructed as a heroic figurehead leading the vanguard against the status quo; he welcomed the mantle, embracing his role as leader of a rebellious movement. His long history with the company lent him credibility to speak on its behalf, and his iconoclastic nature resonated with consumers and aligned with the broader ideology informing the company's actions. However, throughout 2018, Musk's eccentricities also garnered Tesla unwanted attention. While Musk's unfiltered connection to consumers via social media has long bolstered the company's populist bona fides, it has also allowed him the opportunity to play the role of agitator, at times to the company's detriment, as when he falsely claimed that he had secured funding to take the company private. Musk was subsequently charged with fraud by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and forced to resign as Chairman, though he remained on as CEO (Mejia 2018). Given the importance of Musk's heroic figure to consumer participation in institutional work in this space, a question arises: how might this consumer involvement be affected if the heroic figurehead vacates their position, either voluntarily or by force? How might the ideological vacuum left by this figurehead be filled by actors working to promote orthodoxy or heterodoxy?

Finally, future research could explore in greater detail the role of government in responding to market disruption. Prior research has shown that governments play an important market-shaping role (Ertimur and Coskuner-Balli 2015; Giesler and Veresiu 2014; Humphreys 2010); in my context, state governments enacted legislation that set initial market conditions and which, over time, fostered the development of a doxic state. In the wake of disruption, these state governments responded in a variety of ways, with some opting to loosen existing restrictions and others opting to tighten them. Future work could explore the types of institutional work engaged

in by government actors in their response to doxic disruption. Further, much of the cross-boundary work consumers conducted in my context was aimed at either influencing or bypassing legislation enacted by state governments. How might this and other types of ideologically-driven institutional work be more or less effective in states where certain political dispositions (e.g. liberal or conservative) dominate? These avenues of research would further contribute to our understanding of how market actors work to realize certain arrangements in the wake of disruption.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

1. Consumers

1. Let's start by talking a little about you...
 - a. What do you do for a living?
 - b. How long have you been a car enthusiast? Is it something that began with Tesla? (If yes, probe: What about Tesla drew you to it?)
 - c. When did you first hear about Tesla? What was your impression of the company at that time?
 - d. What initially interested you about Tesla?
 - e. Do you feel Tesla is different from other car companies? (If yes, probe: How?)

2. How long have you been posting online about Tesla? Why did you begin getting involved in these conversations?
 - a. Do you think online communities like this are helpful to Tesla? (If yes, probe: How so? If no, probe: Why not?)
 - b. What kinds of things do you generally post when you're discussing Tesla?
 - c. Do you ever see people post on the other side of the issue, disagreeing with your opinion? (If yes, probe: What do you think of that? What kind of people do you think they are? Do you ever engage them in conversation? How does that go?)
 - d. Do you post about your own behaviours, such as making a purchase or boycotting a company? (If yes, probe: Please tell me about a time when you did this. What was your intention in making this kind of post? What reaction did you get? How did you feel about that?)

3. Have you purchased a Tesla?
 - a. If yes, probe:
 - a. When? What model did you purchase? Why did you decide on that model?
 - b. I'd like to walk through your experiences buying your Tesla.
 1. What were the steps involved in buying the vehicle?
 2. Approximately how long did it take?
 3. How did you feel afterward? What was the best part of the experience? The worst part?
 - b. If no, probe:
 - a. Do you plan to? When?

4. Have you ever purchased a vehicle from a non-Tesla dealership?
 - a. If yes, probe:

- a. When? What model did you purchase? Why did you decide on that model?
 - b. I'd like to walk through your experiences buying this vehicle.
 - i. What were the steps involved in buying the vehicle?
 - ii. Approximately how long did it take?
 - iii. How did you feel afterward? What was the best part of the experience? The worst part?
 - c. If Q3 and Q4 were both answered "yes": Was this experience different from your experience buying a Tesla? (If yes, probe: In what ways?)
5. Given what you know about buying directly from Tesla vs. visiting a dealership to purchase a vehicle, which method do you think is better? Why?
6. Tesla has been prevented from doing business in many states across the U.S. – why do you think this is?
 - a. Do you think Tesla should be able to continue using its direct-to-consumer model across the U.S.? Why or why not?
 - b. Do you think consumers have a role to play in helping support Tesla in its fight to continue with its current model? (If yes, probe: Why do you think consumers have a responsibility here? What should they be doing? Have you done anything like this? Why? How did it turn out?)
 - c. What do you think the government's role should be in all of this? Why?
7. To end off, I'd like to get your thoughts on the future – what do you think the auto industry should look like in 10 years? What can consumers do to help achieve that future? What obstacles are in the way of that future? How can these obstacles be overcome?

2. Dealership Personnel

1. Let's start by talking a little about you...
 - a. How long have you been working at this dealership?
 - b. What first drew you to this line of work?
 - c. What are some of your favourite things about the job?
2. Now I'd like to talk a bit about the industry more broadly.
 - a. What would you say are some of the most important issues facing the industry at this point in time?
 - b. What common trends are you seeing among dealers?
 - c. How, if at all, has the process of buying a vehicle changed over the past 10 years?

- d. How do you think consumers typically feel about the process?
3. I'd like to walk through the vehicle-buying process.
 - a. What are the steps involved in buying a vehicle?
 - b. Approximately how long does it usually take?
 - c. How do you think customers usually feel about this process?
 4. Now I'd like to talk about Tesla – approximately when did you first hear about them?
 - a. Do you feel Tesla is different from other car companies? (If yes, probe: How? If no, probe: Why not?)
 - b. Given what you know about buying directly from Tesla vs. visiting a dealership to purchase a vehicle, which method do you think is better? Why?
 - c. Do you view Tesla as a threat to your way of doing business? (If yes, probe: How so? If no, probe: Why not?)
 - d. What have dealerships done to defend themselves against Tesla's entry to the market? Do you feel this has been effective? (If yes, probe: Why? If no, probe: Why not?)
 - e. Has the entry of Tesla changed the way that your organization approaches its work? How so?
 5. Tesla has been prevented from doing business in many states across the U.S. – why do you think this is?
 - a. Do you think Tesla should be able to continue using its direct-to-consumer model across the U.S.? Why or why not?
 - b. Is there anything dealers can do to help ensure Tesla cannot continue with its current model? (If yes, probe: Like what? Has your company done anything like this? Why? How did it turn out?)
 - c. What do you think the government's role should be in all of this? Why?
 - d. To end off, I'd like to get your thoughts on the future – what do you think the auto industry should look like in 10 years?

Appendix B: Queen's University General Research Ethics Board Approval



July 14, 2017

Mr. Jeff Wiebe
Ph.D. Candidate
Smith School of
Business Queen's
University Goodes Hall
143 Union Street
Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6

Dear Mr. Wiebe:

GREB Ref #: GBUS-544-17; TRAQ # 6021283
Title: "GBUS-544-17 Market Entry as Doxic Disruption"

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB), by means of a delegated board review, has cleared your proposal entitled "GBUS-544-17 Market Entry as Doxic Disruption" for ethical compliance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (TCPS 2 (2014)) and Queen's ethics policies. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (Article 6.14) and Standard Operating Procedures (405.001), your project has been cleared for one year. You are reminded of your obligation to submit an annual renewal form prior to the annual renewal due date (access this form at <http://www.queensu.ca/traq/signon.html/>; click on "Events"; under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Annual Renewal/Closure Form for Cleared Studies"). Please note that when your research project is completed, you need to submit an Annual Renewal/Closure Form in Romeo/traq indicating that the project is 'completed' so that the file can be closed. This should be submitted at the time of completion; there is no need to wait until the annual renewal due date.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one year period (access this form at <http://www.queensu.ca/traq/signon.html/>; click on "Events"; under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Adverse Event Form"). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example, you must report changes to the level of risk, applicant characteristics, and implementation of new procedures. To submit an amendment form, access the application by at <http://www.queensu.ca/traq/signon.html>; click on "Events"; under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Request for the Amendment of Approved Studies". Once submitted, these changes will automatically be sent to the Ethics Coordinator, Ms. Gail Irving, at the Office of Research Services for further review and clearance by the GREB or GREB Chair.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued

success in your research. Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joan Stevenson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Joan Stevenson, Ph.D.
Interim Chair
General Research Ethics Board

c: Dr. Jay Handelman,
Supervisor Co-investigator
Chair, Unit REB
Dept. Admin.

Appendix C: Chronology and Corresponding Archival Data

Year	Event	Relevant Archival Data
2006	July – Tesla Roadster unveiled	News Articles
2007	May – Tesla announces intent to direct distribute	News Articles
2008	March – Tesla Roadster production begins May – Tesla opens first showroom	News Articles
2009	May – U.S. Department of Justice issues report on state bans of direct manufacturer sales of vehicles	Government Report
2010	March – Colorado passes legislation limiting Tesla to a single store	News Articles
2012	June – Tesla Model S begins sales October – First Auto Dealers’ Association lawsuits launched in New York, Massachusetts	News Articles
2013	June – Elon Musk describes dealers’ defensive efforts as a “perversion of democracy”	Published Executive Interview
	July – Petition supporting direct auto sales reaches 100,000 signatures necessary to require response from U.S. federal government	News Articles
2014	January – Incoming NADA president identifies promotion of the franchise system to the public as a priority	Published Executive Interview
	March – New Jersey bans Tesla sales; Tesla posts open letter on blog making case for direct sales and urging customers to contact elected representatives June – NADA launches “Get the Facts” public relations campaign; auto manufacturers begin arguing Tesla-only direct sales exemptions enacted in some states are unfair and that existing franchise laws are unduly restrictive	News Articles; Corporate Websites; White Papers
2015	May – U.S. Federal Trade Commission holds workshop on auto distribution	Government Report
	September – Tesla announces Model 3 will be unveiled in 2016	News Articles
2016	March – NADA launches blog platform	Corporate Website
	April – Tesla begins taking orders for Model 3	News Articles
2017	January – NADA launches “My Dealership” consumer-facing advocacy website and campaign	News Articles; Corporate Websites; NADA Conference Proceedings