

Social Movement Theory and Organization Studies

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Abstract

This article reviews the intersection of scholarship concerned with two types of collective action: social movements and formal organizations. Theories of social movements originated in research on crowd behavior while organization theory was founded on theories of rational bureaucracy. Social movement researchers began importing ideas from organization theory in the 1970s to account for the role of formal organizations, resources and strategic behavior in movements. More recently, organization theorists have drawn on social movement theory to understand the politics of organizational and institutional change. Social movement research has offered theoretical models and mechanisms of contestation and change in organizations and organizational fields, and has also drawn organizational scholars' attention to the relevance of movement activism and grassroots mobilization inside organizations for organization theory. The article reviews important classic and contemporary contributions to this research and identifies future directions.

Keywords

social movements, collective action, organization theory, change, conflict, activists, mobilization

Author Bios

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A Historical Introduction

Origins and Early Years

The research traditions of social movement theory¹ and organizational theory are rooted in the common enterprise of understanding the origins and consequences of collective action, but for most of their existence the two traditions have maintained an intellectual distance. Each tradition emerged from a different vantage point and had different intellectual forbearers, developing mostly in isolation from one another. As sociology matured as a discipline in the 1950s and 1960s, social movement research in North America cohered around the study of collective behavior, which grouped social movements with other collective forms of expression like, crowds, riots, and gangs². The common feature of all collective behavior was the subjugation of the individual to the larger collective, group values and emotions, which in general were seen as less rational and civilized (Blumer 1939; Turner and Killian 1957; Turner 1964). During the same time period, organizational theory focused on formal organizations, heavily indebted to Max Weber's work on legal-rational bureaucracy and rationalization. The defining characteristic of formal organizations was seen to be the subjugation of the individual to the impersonal rational rules and hierarchies of bureaucratic rule, and organization theorists were especially interested in explaining the relationship between rational, bureaucratic structures and informal groups (Perrow 1986; Roy 1959) and social domination (Braverman 1974; Burawoy 1979).

Research on both social movements and formal organizations was thus sparked by an interest in how individual behavior – embedded in traditional family and societal structures as well as self-interests – is transformed in collective contexts. However, the two emerging fields focused on rather different forms of transformation. Social movement theory evolved from a subfield that saw collective action as irrational, spontaneous, emotional, and emergent (Blumer 1957; Smelser 1963; Turner and Killian 1957); whereas, organizational theory was largely focused on the rational pursuit of collective goals within the walls of bureaucracy (Crozier 1964; Gouldner 1954; Weber 1947). Moreover, early collective action research saw spontaneous crowd behavior as disruptive of social order, while organization theorists saw formal organizations as sources of

¹ Social movement scholarship forms a large and diverse body of research on a broad set of phenomena. The same can be said about organization studies. Our review is concerned with the intersection between the distinct scholarly communities that produce this research, and we therefore do not impose our own definitions on the research subjects. We have included work that explicitly draws on social movement research or seeks to contribute to that research, but not studies that address similar questions from the vantage point of other theories and frameworks.

² Our discussion of the historical origins and development of social movement theory focuses primarily on North American sociology. The main reason is that the recent attempts at importing or integrating social movement theory into organization studies have primarily emanated in the North American academic context. We trace the origins of these efforts. It should be noted that early European social movement research was historically more grounded in Marxist analyses of capitalist systems of production than in the collective behavior tradition we discuss in detail. European social movement theory moved beyond the historical focus on labor-capital conflicts with the growth of research on “New Social Movements” since the 1980s (e.g., Buechler 1995; Habermas 1981a; Melucci 1980; Offe 1985) – but see Hobsbawm (1959) and Tilly (2004) for more long term historical continuities, and Calhoun (1993) for a critique of the distinction between “new” and “old”. “New Social Movement” researchers' concern with cultural reproduction, collective identity and group solidarity (while maintaining an emphasis on the embeddedness of movement activity in societal structure) has brought them closer to the parallel developments in North American social movement research and are discussed later in this chapter.

social domination and stability. To the eyes of sociologists' at the time, social movements were typically ephemeral, deviant, and potentially destructive (Couch 1968). Formal organizations, in contrast, were purposefully organized, stability-inducing, and functional. It is no surprise that collective behavior and organizational scholars in the 1950s and 1960s saw few commonalities.

One scholar described the field in the following way:

Collective behavior comprises the area of sociological interest which deals with relatively ephemeral, unstructured, and spontaneous instances of social interaction-e.g., crowds, mobs, publics, fads, social movements-in contrast to the more permanent and structured forms of group life which comprise the area of social organization (Pfautz 1961).

Another scholar described these organizational forms as residing along a continuum:

At one extreme, we have a highly organized, cohesive, functioning collection of individuals as members of a sociological group. At the other extreme, we have a mob of individuals characterized by anonymity, disturbed leadership, motivated by emotion, and in some cases representing a destructive collectivity within the inclusive social system (Yablonsky 1959: 108).

The different conceptualizations of social organization led social movement scholars and organizational scholars to also focus on different mechanisms (Kanter 1968). Collective behavior scholars were interested in the affective and group processes underlying consciousness-building and the creation of group solidarity (Blumer 1953; Turner and Killian 1957). In contrast, organizational scholars examined how hierarchical relationships, authority, and role specialization led to the integration of individuals (and groups) into rationalized, collective structures (Parsons and Smelser 1956; Weber 1947).

The intellectual predecessors of collective behavior scholars included theorists, such as Gustave LeBon and Robert Park, who greatly influenced Herbert Blumer's social psychology of collective behavior (McPhail 1989). LeBon's (1896) theory of the crowd was shaped by his observations of the Paris Commune of 1871 and developed in the context of the socialist revolutionary movements of the late 19th century (Nye, 1975). LeBon asserted that 'normal' individuals could be swept up in deviant behavior, transformed by the emotional energy of the crowd. When individuals are "transformed into a crowd...[they develop a] collective mind which makes them feel, think, and act in a manner quite different from that in which each individual of them would feel, think, and act were he in a state of isolation" (1896: 27). Inherent in this view was an assumption that collective action tends to be destructive, even if the ultimate outcome was to transform society. Collective behavior transformed society by first instigating groups to act in seemingly chaotic concerted action, leading to breakdown of social order.

LeBon's characterization of collective behavior as irrational, destructive and dysfunctional has been critiqued on several grounds. Allport (1924), for example, rejected the very idea of a distinction between individual and crowd behavior in favor of stable individual predispositions and the selection of similar individuals into crowds, suggesting that "the individual in the crowd behaves just as he would behave alone, only more so (1924: 295). Hobsbawm (1959) and later

Tilly (2004) question both the historical accuracy of LeBon's observations and his negative view of crowds, instead pointing to more rational explanations for crowd behavior and the positive historical role of movements in societal transformations. Despite these critiques, LeBon's influence on the emerging field of collective behavior was substantial. In North America, the theme of destructive crowd behavior was picked up and elaborated by the Chicago sociologist, Robert Park, whose dissertation examined the relation between crowd behavior and broader societal stability (Park 1904). He argued that the basic units of societal change are acts of social unrest, which are transmitted as a contagion from one individual to another – a concept he referred to as “psychic reciprocity” (1904: 18).

Integrating these insights, Blumer (1939) contended that social unrest was typically precipitated by an exciting event and spreads through crowds, and from crowds to the observing public, in a contagion-like fashion. The process of “milling” about a crowd leads individuals to observe one another's reactions to the growing emotional contagion in the crowd, producing a “collective excitement” (1939: 174). Unrest tends to break down patterns of routine and orderly behavior, causing individuals to forget the norms, moral principles and positions that typically constrain their behavior. Early social movement research thus thought of movements as a collective form of anomie, a breakdown of social order, a view closely resembling Durkheim's depiction of social unrest as a result of breakdowns in social solidarity due to the rapid change and increasing division of labor in modern societies (Durkheim, 1897/1951, 1893/1933). The understanding of movement behavior as primarily disruptive rather than supportive of societies in Durkheim and early North American theorists can be linked to the context of the politically volatile and often violent conditions of the late 19th and early 20th century in Europe and the United States. The social reality of labor and political unrest at the aftermath of the industrial revolution was substantially different to the mostly non-violent reform-oriented movements of the 1960s. The idea that collective behavior's potential for change was rooted in the disruption of social values and routine behavior would, however, continue to be an integral aspect of social movement theory, though in a more strategic way. Piven and Cloward (1977) and Gamson (1975) in particular, viewed movement's tactical ability to disrupt societal institutions as a primary mechanism of change.

During this same time period, organizational scholars viewed formal organizations as value-confirming, self-reproducing structures (Crozier 1964; March and Simon 1958; Selznick 1949). The intellectual predecessors of organizational theory, who included Weber, Barnard, and Taylor, conceptualized organizational structures as a set of mechanisms that enabled individuals to faithfully and routinely propagate certain values and accomplish goals. Compared to collective behavior, organizational structure was relatively stable and robust to emotional contagion. Imprinted with a personality at founding, organizations were largely inertial and capable of transmitting values, beliefs, and goals from one cohort of participants to the next (Selznick 1948; Stinchcombe 1965). Bureaucratic organizations, according to Weber (1921/1978), were designed to stamp out the particularism of individual and group dynamics and reinforce uniformity of behavior. Although potentially a source of alienation, legal-rational bureaucracies were seen as a stabilizing force for social order, reflecting their rapid ascent in state administration and commerce during the late 19th and early 20th century. Authority is a key mechanism in organizations, made possible by hierarchy and consent to be governed (Burawoy 1979; Gouldner 1954). Although organizations may occasionally face challenges to their hierarchy, routine tasks

and procedures help reproduce and stabilize it. This was the predominant view of organizations throughout most of the 1950s and 1960s.

Thus, moving into the 1970s, theorists of collective behavior and theorists of formal organizations in sociology held very different conceptions about the phenomena they observed. In fact, it could be easily argued that formal organization and collective behavior like social movements occupied different ends of a continuum of types of social organization. They were different species, each requiring its own theory, concepts, and empirical studies. They developed in parallel but there was little cross-fertilization between the two subfields. As management studies began to develop as an interdisciplinary academic field in the 1950s and 1960s, it, too, focused on the internal administrative dynamics of formal organizations. Consequently, the contribution of sociological research to this emerging field was also predominantly grounded in the Weberian tradition of organization theory (Whyte, 1956; Miller, 1960; Thompson, 1967).

The sociological treatment of the labor movement illustrates these intellectual boundaries well. As discussed above, much initial work in the collective behavior tradition was developed in the study of labor and working class movements. However, as these movements became more institutionalized, North American social movement scholars turned their attention to other movements and studied labor and employment issues only when they entailed contestations outside organized labor relations (e.g., Roscigno and Danaher 2001). On the other hand, organizational sociologists and industrial relations scholars have concerned themselves mostly with bureaucratic forms of conflict, such as collective bargaining, union campaigns and employment systems (e.g., Jacoby 2004). The distinction in European scholarship between new social movements and the original 'old' labor movement reflects the salience of a similar boundary.

Crossing Paths: 1970-1990

In the 1960s social movements began to take a prominent role in global politics, with the rise of various civil rights (concerning e.g., race, gender, ethnicity, disability), peace, environmental, and counter-cultural movements. These movements were mostly non-violent and reform-oriented. Students of social movements, many of whom were sympathetic to the activists' causes, found the earlier theories lost their appeal. In North America, new scholars rejected how older theories portrayed movements as irrational actors and purely reactive, rather than strategic and purposive. Further, the crowd model of social movements did not square with their empirical observations of new social movements, like the civil rights movement, which were very sophisticated and drew their leadership from a vast organizational network. In Europe, scholars found orthodox Marxist theory's focus on class conflict and material production ill equipped to account for movements that were carried by the middle class, seemingly had a cultural rather than material basis, and where conflict played out in the civic sphere rather than solely with state institutions. As a result, social movement scholars of this new generation across the Atlantic substantially reformulated theories of social movements.

Their reformulation had three main components. First, scholars replaced the crowd and unrest as the primary mechanisms of movement behavior with organizations and resources. Following a series of empirical studies looking at social movement organizations (Zald and Ash 1966; Nelson

1971; Curtis and Zurcher 1973; Anderson and Dynes 1973; Helfgot 1974; Tilly, Tilly, and Tilly 1975), McCarthy and Zald (1977) introduced resource mobilization theory. In their argument movements were akin to industries, consisting of social movement organizations that competed for resources and developed strategies that optimized their chances for survival. This new strand of research drew extensively from the past generation of organizational scholarship, examining the formal and informal features of social movement organizations as well as their strategies and tactical repertoires (e.g., Morris 1984; Zald 1987; Minkoff 1994; 1997; Staggenborg 1996; McCammon 2003; Taylor and Van Dyke 2004).

Second, corresponding to a broader interest in sociology in strategic and rational actor models, social movement theorists began focusing on the strategic calculations movements (and their members) made as they sought to optimize their effectiveness in recruiting new members and their chances of political success. The political opportunity structure perspective provided an explanation for when and how movement actors mobilized (e.g., Jenkins and Perrow 1977; Kitschelt 1986; Tarrow 1994; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). Movement actors respond to incentives to mobilize, as well as perceived opportunities for influence; likewise, movements tend to falter when they face severe constraints, such as repression. Participation in movements was no longer thought to be a blind reaction to contagion; rather movement adherents were motivated by selective incentives and the costs of and barriers to participation (Klandermans 1984; Oliver, Marwell, and Teixeira 1985; Oliver and Marwell 1988).

And third, scholars studying “new” social movements turned attention to cultural practices as the point of contention, replacing a previous focus on conflict over the distribution of material resources and political domination. New social movement researchers located the conflict from which movements originate in the increasing penetration of the previously private sphere of individuals’ life-world by the institutional systems of the market and the state (Habermas 1981a, 1981b; Offe 1985). Accordingly, movements arise to politicize and bring into the public sphere practices such as consumption, family life or scientific research. Because the state is not the sole antagonist or site of this contestation, conflicts can play out outside the formal political system and concern cultural understandings, public representation and collective identities (Buechler 1995; Melucci 1996). Communicative processes, the media and cultural framings thus take on a central place in understanding movement mobilization and outcomes (Benford and Snow 2000; Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993; Habermas 1981b).

Social movement theorists’ newfound interest in formal structure, strategies and culture may have made them natural allies, especially among sociologists, of organizational theorists. But at the same time as this theoretical transformation, North American organizational scholarship experienced its own conceptual shift. In the 1970s, organizational theorists became increasingly interested in dynamics occurring outside the organization. Sparked by the rise of contingency theory in the prior decade, intra-organizational processes took a backseat to the study of organizational environments. Population ecology (Hannan and Freeman 1977), neoinstitutional theory (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Meyer and Rowan 1977), and resource dependence theory (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978) moved the focus of organizational analysis to population-, field-, and network-level dynamics, arguably at the neglect of the intra-organizational power dynamics initially of interest to students of social movement organizations (Zald 1970).

Even though resource dependence theory held the potential for a thriving research stream on intra-organizational political dynamics, this aspect of the theory lost steam, the focus shifting to inter-organizational dependence networks (Burt 1988). Organization ecology soon conceptualized selection and founding dynamics as driven by population and resource mechanics, rather than as organizational contestation (Hannan and Freeman 1977). Neoinstitutional scholarship shared a cultural orientation with new social movement research, but focused on inter-organizational fields rather than their interpenetration with other societal spheres, and it emphasized cultural consensus over contestation (DiMaggio and Powell 1991; Meyer and Scott 1992). As analytic interest shifted to higher and lower-levels of analysis, the organization, as an agent and arena of political contestation, became less visible (King et al. 2010). Thus, just as the organization became a central unit of analysis in social movement theory, organizational scholars began to put more emphasis on factors existing outside the organization, such as cultural and resource mechanisms. And while the cultural turn in new social movement research opened the door for including market and civil society organizations and their practices in movement research, the cultural-frame institutionalism in organizational theory took field isomorphism as the starting point, reproducing rather than overcoming an existing divergence of scholarly interest between contested change and rationalized stability.

The opportunity for social movement theory to contribute to organization studies was thus largely lost. Very few scholars sought to realize the potential for synergy between the two domains of inquiry. Mayer Zald and Michael Berger (1978) raised the possibility that social movement-like dynamics might explain intra-organizational political maneuverings; however, as Zald (2005) later noted, this insight was largely ignored for more than two decades. Zald's (1970) proposal of an open polity model of organizations experienced a similar fate. For much of the 1980s, bridging the two fields was thus a one-way road from organizational theory to social movement analysis (Clemens and Minkoff 2004). It was not until the mid-1990s that some organizational scholars, many of whom were located in universities with prominent social movement researchers, began to look to social movement theory with a view to forging more comprehensive connections.

Joining Forces, 1990s and Beyond

During the 1990s, organizational scholars began looking for micro-level and political explanations for organizational and institutional change to supplement the environment-centric perspectives that had come to dominate the field (e.g., Powell and DiMaggio 1991). At the same time, a few social movement scholars continued to draw from organization theory and began to graft in elements and mechanisms from new institutional theory, network analysis, and population ecology to better explain the potential for change in social movement organizations and sectors (e.g., Clemens 1993; 1997; Minkoff 1997). For example, Minkoff (1993; 1997) borrowed the density dependence model from population ecology to explore shifts in the protest cycles of the civil rights and women's movements.

Several organizational scholars were already well positioned, geographically and structurally, to be influenced by social movement theory and vice versa. The University of Arizona and University of Michigan were especially fertile places for the linking of the two subfields given deep traditions in both areas of study. At Arizona, Clemens (1993; 1996) combined insights

from social movement theory and new institutionalism in organization theory to explore how activists created the seeds for transformative change by creating innovative organizational forms. Soule (1997; Strang and Soule 1998) used diffusion models to explain the spread of movement tactics and the expansion of a movement's tactical repertoire (see also Olzak and Uhrig 2001). Doug McAdam (e.g., McAdam and Rucht 1993) and Neil Fligstein (1996; Fligstein and Mara-Drita 1996) began to integrate aspects social movement theory and organizational analysis during their time at Arizona, culminating years later in their broadly-conceived idea of "strategic action fields" in which they portray actors across multiple societal domains vying for dominance in a process of ongoing cultural and political contestation (Fligstein and McAdam 2012).

At Michigan, Davis and Thompson (1994; Thompson and Davis 1997) drew on social movement theory to explain the rise of shareholder activism and a shift in contemporary views of corporate governance. They argued that the shareholder rights movement could not be explained by efficiency criteria or financial incentives alone. Social movement theory offered an explanation that highlighted the structural opportunities in the political environment and the mobilization of organizational resources that made collective action among shareholders possible. The paper signaled a subtle shift to an analysis of the political economy of firms, aligning field-level analyses with theories of business elites (e.g., Mizruchi 1992; Palmer and Barber 2001). Mayer Zald, a pivotal figure at the University of Michigan, continued to press the argument that organizations ought to be conceived as political entities and that social movements could explain both change within organizations and markets (Zald, Morrill, and Rao 2005). In the coming years, research on organizational politics would begin incorporating social movement mechanisms (Fligstein 1996; Rao, Morrill, and Zald 2000; Raeburn 2002).

The focus on organizational politics created an opening to address the "problem of agency" in the heavily structural organizational theories of the time (Fligstein 2001: 105). Social movement theory provided organizational scholars with the theoretical mechanisms needed to explain bottom-up, purposeful change without having to resort to individualistic models of behavior. By focusing on the agents who sought institutional change through collective action (Hoffman 1996), the tactics employed by change proponents (Rojas 2006), and the social skills used to draw others into collective action (Fligstein 2001), scholars emphasized the purposeful and strategic nature of transformational organizational change.

Moreover, blending social movement and organizational theories offered a way to re-introduce overt conflict as an important organizational dynamic that underlies much structural change. Conflict has always been central to social movement scholars, stemming from the original formulation of collective behavior as disruptive of social order, and the grounding of movements in class struggle in Marxist approaches. Social movement scholars interested in institutional change imagined that disruption would be a key mechanism to destabilizing institutions, offsetting the power of the advantaged and creating a public sphere where organizational practices could be contested (e.g., Piven and Cloward 1977; Gamson 1990; Buechler, 1995; Kellogg 2011).

Inasmuch as organizations, especially corporations, have become centers of power that directly impinge on everyday life, they have also become more important sites of contestation (King and Pearce 2010; Walker, Martin, and McCarthy 2008). Much of the new research that brought

social movement research into organization theory highlighted the role of contestation and disruption in when and how organizations change (e.g., Luders 2006; King and Soule 2007; King 2008; Weber, Rao, Thomas 2009). In contrast to existing organizational research, which highlighted the isomorphic tendencies of organizations, this new research agenda allowed for the possibility that actors located in those institutional fields will challenge organizational authority from the outside and the inside. This emerging view of fields as arenas of struggle has since been elaborated by Fligstein and McAdam (2012).

Disruption by movements can not only directly challenge the practices of incumbent organizations, but can also initiate indirect change at the level of organizational fields, inasmuch as social movements have often fueled new organizational forms and markets (Schneiberg 2002; Weber, Heinze, and DeSoucey 2008). For example, social movements foster new collective identities and solidarity, which can translate into new industries or organizational forms (Rao, Monin and Durand 2003; Weber, Heinze, and DeSoucey 2008; Sine and Lee 2009). These identities were not only potentially useful cultural tools used to fabricate the structure of entrepreneurial industries, but were also sources of opposition and conflict that gave actors the motivation to engage in collaborative ventures in the first place (Carroll 1997; Carroll and Swaminathan 2000). Recent formulations of organizational ecology have theorized that actors construct and use oppositional identities and frames as mechanisms for creating and sustaining heterogeneity in organizational forms (Carroll and Swaminathan 2000; Greve et al. 2006; Sikavica and Pozner 2013).

The burgeoning literature on social movement dynamics and organizational theory was christened, so to speak, with the publication of an edited volume that brought together prominent voices in the area (Davis, McAdam, Scott, and Zald 2005) and a special issue of *Administrative Science Quarterly* on the topic (Davis, Morrill, Rao, and Soule 2008). In the introduction to the special issue, the editors argued that social movement and organizational theories were “twins separated at birth” and that the time had come to reunite them (2008: 390). Subsequent years have witnessed a steady stream of empirical research and theoretical dialogue (see, e.g., de Bakker, den Hond, King, and Weber, 2013). The “family reunion” of social movement and organization theory has been fruitful but remains incomplete, opening new avenues of research and refocusing our attention on conceptual terrain previously abandoned.

The Influence of Social Movement Research on Contemporary Organization Theory

The contributions of social movement research to organization theory fall into two categories. One set of contributions take the form of theoretical cross-fertilization, where movement research has offered a broad understanding of collective action and a set of mechanisms that were previously neglected by organizational research. By drawing on social movement theories, organization theorists can enrich and enhance how they study organizations. The other set of contributions concern social movements as an empirical phenomenon, where social movement research has alerted organization theorists to the importance of organizations’ informal political environment for understanding their conduct. By paying attention to empirical movement research, organization theorists can expand what they study and develop more complete models of organizations and their environments.

Influences at the Level of Theory

Social movement theory has been attractive to students of formal organizations not least because many contemporary organizations share characteristics traditionally associated with social movements, such as fluid boundaries, transient existence, and network forms of governance. This has led some organization theorists to suggest that traditional organization theory is an increasingly inappropriate frame for understanding organizations because it assumes that organizations are bounded stable entities with bureaucratic internal structures (Davis and McAdam 2000).

Theoretical borrowing from social movement research, with its focus on informal dynamics and fluid organization offers an expanded conceptual toolkit for understanding contemporary organizational dynamics, from shareholder activism (Davis and Thompson 1994) to open source communities (O'Mahoney and Bechky 2008). Social movement research provides an overall metaphor for studying organizational dynamics as “movement-like” processes, and a set of micro-mechanisms, such as framing, collective identity and action mobilization that can be combined with existing theories of organizations (Walker 2012). In fact, Campbell (2005) has argued that at the level of mechanisms for collective action, social movement and organization theorists already employ many parallel concepts that can be integrated further, namely opportunity, framing, diffusion, translation, bricolage, networks and leadership. Social movement research offers theoretical insights especially for linking micro interactions to organizational and institutions change (Gerhards and Rucht 1992, Staggenborg 2002), for understanding informal mobilization and collective organizational politics (Zald, Morrill and Rao, 2005), and for offering a conceptual integration of the political and cultural dimensions of organizations and their environments (Clemens 1993, Raeburn 2004.) Although this theoretical integration has clearly enriched organizational theories of change, Clemens (2005:351) also points out limits, wondering “When tie-dyed activists and poor people's marches are central to the imagery of a theory, can that theory be transposed to corporate boardrooms and back offices without doing fundamental violence to our understanding of both phenomena? When formal authority and control over resources infuse the theoretical imagination of one literature, can that body of work truly inform the analysis of resistance to authority?”

A major stream within this body of research applies social movement perspectives to understanding organizations' relations with their external environments. The unique insight of a social movement perspective to organization/environment relations is that the actions and effectiveness of specific actors must be understood as embedded in a broader network of activity -- the movement. Social movement theory thus adds collective models of behavior to the traditionally more actor-centric view in organization theory. For example, stakeholder theory and resource dependence theory have traditionally conceptualized organizations' environments as made up of a web of relationships with discrete and independent others. In contrast, King (2008b) draws on resource mobilization theory to emphasize that collective action is critical for latent stakeholder demands to become effective and that insights from social movement theory may help explain stakeholder effectiveness.

One important insight transferred from movement research to this work is that structural sources of stakeholder power do not automatically lead to influence, but that like movement participants,

organizational stakeholders must be mobilized to exert actual pressure. Davis and Thompson (1994) borrow political opportunity a mobilization concepts from movement research to recast the diffusion of governance practices as a process of contestation between different groups, thus offering an effective critique of agency theory views. Davis and Thompson (1994: 152) explain that a movement approach contributes and understanding that “corporate control is inherently political, and politics is accomplished by coalitions of mutually acquainted actors that recognize or construct a common interest. Social movement theory adds insight into the process by which actors translate shared interests into collective action.” And while organizational theorists originally emphasized the role of identity for organizational solidarity, stability and distinctiveness, Rao, Monin and Durand (2003) and Weber, Thomas and Rao (2009) recast identities as sources of contestation and change.

Following Zald and Berger’s (1978) characterization of organizations as political systems, a smaller but growing number of scholars have studied social movement-like processes within organizations. For example, Kellogg (2010, 2011) studied mobilization inside hospitals in favor of reforming working conditions for residents. Understanding organizational change agents as workplace activists offers new insights into the motivation, tactics and challenges for organizational change and resistance at the lower echelons of formal organizations. In her studies of change in hospitals, for example, Kellogg (2010) applies the idea of ‘free spaces’ as important for movement formation and mobilization (Polletta, 1999) to internal activists, offering a new conceptual tool to understand the politics of organizational control, change and resistance. This line of research has also built on Zald’s (1970) original open polity conception of organizations to understand organizational conflict and change as embedded in external institutions and movements (Scully and Segal 2002; Zald, Morrill & Rao 2005; Briscoe and Safford 2009)..

Lastly, social movement concepts and perspectives have been successfully applied towards understanding the emergence and transformation of organizational fields, markets and industries as contested forms of collective action. Movement-like processes are important to efforts to create new organizational forms (Clemens 1997), market niches (Carroll and Swaminathan 2001; Weber, Heinze and DeSoucey 2008), and to the transformation of industries (Rao, Monin and Durand 2003) and institutional fields (Lounsbury 2001). Fligstein and McAdam (2012) have taken the theoretical fusion of institutional theories of organizations and social movement concepts further by developing the idea of ‘strategic action fields’, i.e. “socially constructed arenas within which actors with varying resource endowments vie for advantage” (Fligstein and McAdam 2012: 10). Organizations are agents in such fields but can also be analyzed as fields themselves.

Influences at the Phenomenon Level

The increased attention to social movement research in organization theory has also led students of organizations to attend to political and cultural aspects of organizations that were previously ignored. As discussed in our review of the historical trajectory of organization theory, the study of organizational politics and the political economy of organizations had begun to falter by the end of the 20th century, not least because earlier theories emphasized static elements of politics, such as insider and elite structural control, institutional domination and dependence. The study of social movements offered a way for a new generation of scholars first to recognize and then to

study new empirical issues, such as public contestation around organizations and informal forms of control by political actors using extra-institutional channels of influence. By paying attention to (new) social movements, students of organizations have accumulated a wealth of empirical insights about how movements, as empirical phenomena, interact with organizations.

Social movement scholars have also become more interested in mobilized contestation around firms and markets and less state-centric than in the past (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001). While much of the North American research on movements since the 1960s concentrated on their impact on the political and legislative process, Walker, Martin, and McCarthy (2010) estimated that 40% of protests in the 1960 to 1995 time period actually targeted non-state actors, including corporations. The rising prominence of transnational movements has added to this growing interest among movement scholars in global institutions and multinational corporations (e.g., Smith 2001).

Social movements can be seen as a form of informal social control of organizations that can play a creative or destructive role. A unique challenge for movements in affecting formal organizations is that many of them, and especially corporations, are constituted as private concerns, which by design and formal constitution are relatively closed to external claimants other than owners (Zald, Morrill and Rao 2005, Weber, Rao and Thomas 2009). In contrast, state systems with at least some formal democratic elements are open polities that offer more favorable political opportunity structures and formal access movement influence, for example through the electoral and judicial process (Tarrow, 1994). As a result, very few movements have been successful in creating institutionalized forms of influence over corporations. The most prominent exception is the labor movement in the form of collective bargaining rights, works councils and similar mechanisms in some countries (Bamber and Lansbury, 1993; Jacoby, 2004)

One stream of studies has sought to identify the paths and mechanisms through which movements contest and influence organizations. One form of influence is indirect, by changing the institutional environment organizations, for example through the policies and regulations that affect organizations. For example, Hiatt, Sine and Tolbert (2009) showed how the prohibition movement's success in banning alcohol spurred the emergence of the soft drink producers, while Lee (2011) examined the effect of organics certification on market entry. Another path is via more diffuse cultural change in public understandings and sentiments, which may translate into consumer preferences, employee identities and more diffuse identity threats (Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Schurman 2004; Weber, Rao and Thomas, 2009). While much of the current research focuses on movements that oppose organizational practices, movements are also instrumental in creating alternatives to incumbent organizations by fueling the creation of new organizations, technologies and markets (Rao, Morrill and Zald 2000; Weber, Heinze and DeSoucey 2008; Vasi 2010). Vasi's study traces the growth of the wind power industry over several decades to the influence of ideas and resources generated by the environmental movement, while Weber et al. show how movement processes fueled the creation of a new market category of 'grass-fed' meat and dairy products by providing alternative cultural understandings, stimulating innovation and collective identities, and enabling economic exchange between producers and consumers.

Another path of influence is through direct interactions between activist groups and organizations. Campaigns against specific organizations that use protest repertoires such as boycotts, lawsuits, and street protests, may threaten to disrupt organizations operations (Luders 2006), or, more commonly, pose threats to an organization's financial interests (King and Soule

2007), its reputation (King 2008), or both, inasmuch as reputation is perceived to have financial consequences (King 2011). Moreover, some activists use institutional tactics, such as submitting shareholder resolutions related to particular issues or grievances, and engage directly with organizational insiders (Proffitt and Spicer 2006). Although less disruptive than protests and other extra-institutional tactics on its surface, shareholder activism of this type still has the potential to create perceived risks that may agitate analysts and executives and create pressure on them to engage in dialogue with the activists (Reid and Toffel 2009; Lee and Lounsbury 2011; Vasi and King 2012). In addition to these overtly conflictual interactions, some movement organizations also engage with organizations in more cooperative ways, as standard setters, certifiers and non-governmental 'soft regulators' (Bartley 2007, Balsiger 2010).

The internal organization of the targeted organization also influences its susceptibility to activists influence. Organizations vary in their capacity and commitment to address movement demands, and the unity and professional identities of organizational elites influence their response strategy (Zald, Morrill, and Rao 2005). For example, Weber, Rao, and Thomas (2009) found that pharmaceutical companies with more diverse executives were more likely to re-allocate resources when faced with opposition to genetic engineering technology. Internal and external mobilization have also been shown to reinforce each other, for example in the context of granting domestic partnership benefits to GLBT employees (Briscoe and Safford 2009).

Some organizational researchers with an interest in social movements have also revisited the early work by Zald and Berger (1978) and have begun to study political mobilization and intergroup conflict inside organizations. Much of this more recent body of research has addressed dynamic and sometimes tenuous forms of contestation. The main focus has been on understanding workplace activists' identity motivations and tactics (e.g., Scully and Segal, 2002; Raeburn 2004), and on the interaction between grass-roots mobilization, and organizational elites and hierarchical control systems (Binder 2002, Kellogg 2011a, b).

Outlook and Emerging Areas of Research

Despite the substantial ground covered by research at the intersection between social movement and organization studies, it is fair to characterize this as a relatively young and rapidly evolving domain of organization theory. We expect this research to continue to grow, both because of the continued and possibly expanding relevance of social movement and collective action campaigns for formal organizations and because of the growing community of scholars that are engaged in the theoretical bridging of the two fields.

Looking ahead, several areas for further theoretical engagement exist. For example, both movement and organizational researchers have become interested in the role of culture, collective emotions and biography in collective action. For research on social movements, this agenda constitutes a re-visiting and re-envisioning of the role of emotional contagion and collective rationality that was central to early movement research (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2004; Summers-Effler, 2010) and an engagement with biographical roots of inequality and conflict (Bourdieu 1977). In a more contemporary way, social movement researchers thus have begun to re-engage with ideas from early collective behavior research, such as LeBon's study of crowds. For organizational researchers, this turn away from more strategic models of behavior

offers a way to better understand the experience of contradictions and conflict in complex organizations, and responses that may or may not include political mobilization (Meyerson and Scully 1995; Creed, deJordy and Lok 2010, Voronov and Vince 2012). The insights in each respective area could be applied to the other, understanding, for example the effect of complexity on action mobilization in movement groups, or the collective emotional underpinnings of organizational politics.

A second area in which additional theoretical work is needed is collective politics inside organizations. One challenge is to what extent frameworks and concepts developed to understand societal movements can be applied or need to be modified when studying formal organizations (see e.g., Clemens 2005). Attempts at theoretical integration via middle range theory by social movement and organizational theorists may stimulate and enable additional research on this question. For example, Gerhards and Rucht's (1992) concept of 'meso-mobilization' puts organizations, and intra- and inter-organizational processes, at the center of movement mobilization. In organization theory, Ahrne and Brunsson (2011)'s work on meta and partial organizations seeks to address forms of organization that resemble in part informal movements and in part traditional bureaucracies. Synthetic concepts and frameworks offer another direction. A prominent example is Fligstein and McAdam (2012)'s elaboration the concept of 'strategic action field' with a goal to integrate political contestation more directly with the field concept in organizational and new institutional theory. .

A third growth area is to examine how powerful corporations and elites directly influence grass-roots mobilization. Recent research on this topic has shown that corporations have begun creating and/or funding grass-roots groups and using the power of an activist identity to promote their interests in the public sphere (Walker 2009; Lee and Romano 2013; Fetner and King 2013). Social movement forms of organizing are particularly attractive for corporations that need more direct access to the communities in which they operate or have questionable socio-political legitimacy to pursue their interests overtly, such as oil, tobacco or financial service companies. Although potentially powerful mechanisms for mobilizing public opinion and political support, these forms of organizing may have deleterious consequences for the social capital of the communities they seek to influence (Walker, 2009). It's also unknown to what extent such attempts may actually create long-term damage to the ability of dedicated activists in those communities to counter-mobilize and offer up their own views. Future research ought to examine this interplay between elite-led movements and community-based forms of activism.

Research on organizations and movements also shares with mainstream social movement research an empirical focus on effective movements and instances of successful mobilization (Bernstein, 2003). This emphasis may contribute to an overly optimistic view of the ability of movements to affect change in the face of entrenched organizational, political and economic structures. An important area for research is therefore the study of failed mobilization attempts, more limited and ineffective forms of resistance, and how movement activism interacts with the structural and resource-based power of organizations, especially large corporations.

Lastly, we expect that research at the intersection of social movements and organizations will continue to respond to a changing world in which movements and formal organizations alike will evolve. Examples here are the increasing professionalization and bureaucratization of many movements to resemble conventional civil society organizations (de Bakker, den Hond, King and Weber 2013), the adoption of movement-like tactical repertoires by corporate actors and their participation in campaigns (Walker 2009, McDonnell 2013), the increasingly global and

transnational scope of movements and organizations (Smith 2001, della Porta and Tarrow 2005, Tsutsui and Lim forthcoming), and the impact of new media and communication technologies on prompting new movements and organizational forms, but also on the core processes of mobilization, coordination and contestation (Garrett 2006).

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