Calls for reintroducing agency, politics and contestation into institutional analysis are now legion, spanning more than two decades since DiMaggio’s (1988) classic piece, and gaining new urgency as scholars struggle to explain institutional emergence and change. Institutionalists face persistent difficulties in these tasks. Working from arguments about isomorphism, diffusion, or path dependence, they often invoke ad hoc explanations like exogenous shocks in order to reconcile change and path creation with theories that stress the contextual sources of stability, continuity and conformity (Greenwood and Hinings 1996; Clemens and Cook 1999; Campbell 2004; Schneiberg 2005; Streeck and Thelen 2005). To address these difficulties, institutionalists have begun to revise both their conceptions of fields and their views of action. From a more structural approach to agency, some scholars increasingly view fields as comprised of multiple logics, or by indeterminacy, ambiguities or contradictions, opening theoretical spaces for action (Stryker 2000; Seo and Creed 2002; Lounsbury 2007; Schneiberg 2007; Fliigstein and McAdam 2012; Padgett and Powell 2012; Thornton et al. 2012; Ocasio, Thornton and Lounsbury, Chapter 19 this volume). Focusing more on interests, other scholars have brought new attention to actors and what they do, producing studies of ‘institutional entrepreneurs’ (Beckert 1999; Hwang and Powell 2005; Hardy and McGuire 2008) and institutional work (Lawrence et al. 2013). Within this milieu, scholars have also sought to overcome ‘excessive institutional determinism’ by turning to social movement theory and the study of collective mobilization.

Spanning sociology and political science, social movement theory has produced a wealth of concepts and research on change, including studies of students organizing to register black voters in the 1960s (McAdam 1988), the mobilization of farmers, workers and women to make claims on the state (Clemens 1997), shareholder activism to contest managerial control over corporations
(Davis and Thompson 1994), the growth of identity movements pursuing peace, gay/lesbian rights and environmentalism (e.g., Laraña et al. 1994), and the rise of transnational pressure groups (Keck and Sikkink 1998). What these studies share is an interest in contestation and collective mobilization processes – how groups coalesce to make claims for or against certain practices or actors in order to create or resist new institutional arrangements or transform existing ones. They also share an interest in tracing how contestation and collective action rest on the capacity of groups to mobilize resources and recruit members, their ability to engage in cultural entrepreneurship or frame issues to increase acceptance of their claims (Lounsbury and Glynn 2001; Werner and Conelissen 2014), and the political opportunity structures that constrain or enable mobilization (McAdam et al. 1996). This chapter focuses on how engaging collective mobilization and social movement theory has inspired new work in institutional analysis.

The integration of movements into institutional analysis revised imageries of institutional processes, actors and the structure of fields, generating new leverage for explaining change and path creation. Regarding processes, it has added contestation, collective action, framing and deliberate mobilization for alternatives to conceptual repertoires of legitimation, diffusion, isomorphism and self-reproducing taken-for-granted practices (Jepperson 1991; Colyvas and Powell 2006). Regarding actors, it counterposes challengers and champions of alternatives to accounts of states, professions and other incumbents as key players. Regarding structure, it moves from images of isomorphic worlds of diffusion, path dependence and conformity toward conceptions of fields as sites of contestation, organized around multiple and competing logics and forms.

As will be clear, work that integrates movements into neo-institutionalism parallels work on institutional entrepreneurship in key respects (Hardy and McGuire 2008). Both emphasize agency, deliberate or strategic action, and self-conscious mobilization around alternatives. Both wrestle with problems or paradoxes of how actors embedded within institutions can change those systems, how institutions limit or support change, and how actors draw on the elements or contradictions of existing institutions to forge new ones. Both identify some of the same processes as critical for change, including framing, theorization, transposition and the recombination of logics. Yet where institutional entrepreneurship research often attributes substantial casual efficacy to individuals, studies linking movements and institutionalism are more deeply rooted in contextually situated approaches to agency. They thus place greater emphasis on politics and collective mobilization as motors of change, and more systematically address the relations between activity, collective organization and existing institutional contexts.

Our central claim is that analyzing movements within neo-institutional theory is essential for understanding when and how: (1) paths or fields become constituted around multiple, competing logics; and (2) multiple logics, contradictions and ambiguities fuel field-level change and new path creation. In making this claim, we accept, rather than dismiss, contextual arguments about durability, path dependence and stability that give institutionalism its analytical edge in explaining continuity, differences or ‘higher order’ effects on organizations (Schneiberg and Clemens 2006). Institutions exhibit increasing returns and positive feedbacks (Pierson 2000). Actors empowered by existing institutions use their advantages to elaborate institutions to preserve their power and preclude alternatives. Diffusion, adoption and the resulting communities of practice create isomorphic pressures that make conformity a condition for legitimacy, fueling further diffusion. Institutionalized theories of order render alternatives unthinkable or inappropriate, ensuring that even opposition occurs in those terms, deepening the paths it contests.
In short, rather than simply assert an actor-centered institutionalism, we begin with the structural insight that limits on alternatives and pressures for continuity or convergence often exercise considerable force. Reflexive action, the capacity to articulate alternatives, the salience of multiple logics, or their translation into change, cannot be assumed. To the contrary, these are often fragile achievements that ultimately rest on the emergence and efficacy of social movements.

Using existing and ongoing research, this chapter outlines analytical strategies for addressing the rise and effects of movements on institutional fields and organizations. We pay particular attention to how those strategies revise existing institutional accounts of change and path creation. In sections 1 and 2 we consider movements as agents and infrastructures of change, outlining two approaches to what movements do and how they affect fields. One treats movements as forces against institutions, as forces operating outside established channels to assert new visions and disrupt or directly contest existing arrangements, evoking legitimacy crises, sense-making and other institutional processes within fields. This approach revises two canons in institutional theory – the two-stage model of institutionalization and histories of change as punctuated equilibrium. It also provides insights into how fields become constituted around multiple logics.

A second approach considers the rise and impact of movements within fields, examining movements as institutional forces or infrastructures for institutional processes including theorization, recombination and diffusion. This approach reveals how diffusion, translation and adoption are political processes that often depend on collective action. It also begins to shed light on how movements emerge from and exploit contradictions or multiple logics within fields to mobilize support, forge new paths or produce change. While our discussion analytically segregates outside, challenger movements from insider movements, we note that these distinctions are often blurred in reality. In fact, some of the most exciting recent work emphasizes the processes by which outsider movements catalyze movements and changes inside fields and organizations, how movements can combine outsider and insider efforts, and how challengers and incumbents inside and outside of fields interact and influence each other, collectively producing change.

In section 3 we turn from movements as agents of change to analyses of how institutions serve as contexts that shape contestation and collective action. Institutionalists have recognized that institutions constrain and enable mobilization, create openings for challengers, and shape their capacities to produce change. This has led them to the movements literature on political opportunity structure and institutional mediation (e.g., Amenta et al. 1992; Davis and Thompson 1994; McAdam 1999), prompting new insights about opportunity structures, a reinvigoration of multilevel approaches, and new strategies for analyzing movements, existing institutions and change. Taking a decidedly cultural cast, these strategies reformulate arguments about political opportunity structures as institutional opportunity structures, highlighting how movements and change are endogenously shaped by institutions.

Based on these discussions, we turn in section 4 to suggest new directions for research on how movements and institutional dynamics combine to produce change. One key direction is methodological: to develop clearer, more direct measures of movements and to exploit the analytical leverage of multivariate approaches. This will help assess and systematize claims from qualitative and historical work about movement effects and the relations between movements, institutional contexts and outcomes. Three other directions involve substantively rethinking the relationships between movements, institutional dynamics and context in fueling path creation and change. One direction for future
research flips the imagery in opportunity structure arguments of institutions as contexts for movements, and analyzes movements as contexts and political conditions for diffusion and other institutional processes. Insofar as alternatives are contested or suppressed by vested interests, their diffusion will depend on collective action and the mobilization of power by champions of new practices and forms. In cases like these, movements can moderate institutional processes, supporting diffusion or translation in three ways: by serving as field-wide mechanisms for mobilizing power, by working as political forces within organizations to increase their receptivity to alternatives, or by working between organizations to increase innovators’ influence as exemplars. Taking this approach to how movements operate in fields can help explain the diffusion of alternatives and more diverse outcomes related to practice variation.

A second direction for future work retains the imagery of institutions as contexts or conditions for mobilization, but analyzes those contexts as opportunity structures characterized by institutional heterogeneity, multiple institutions, or architectures of multiple, adjacent or overlapping fields (Evans and Kay 2008; Greenwood et al. 2011; Mora 2014). Such contexts contain substantial potentials for transposing forms and frames within or across settings, using changes, processes or disruptions in nearby fields to alter dynamics within a field, or leveraging and repurposing institutions in one domain for path creation and change in another. Pursuing this approach broadens our conception of opportunity structures, highlighting how institutional contexts can provide activists with opportunities for using dissonance, cross-field pressures, or inter-institutional effects to more effectively translate numbers, organization and action into change.

In a third direction for future research, we consider the origins of movements and institutions, taking an historical approach and considering the relationship between institutions and movements as an ongoing process in which combinations or sequences of movements cumulatively produce change. Movements might figure in the production of unintended and incremental trajectories of change. That is, even when they are defeated or their time has passed, movements may leave legacies, elements of institutional orders, and bits and pieces of paths not taken, producing diffuse but important effects, and creating possibilities for subsequent movements, institution-building and transformation (Schneiberg 2007). Focusing on these possibilities sheds further light on how movements and their effects are endogenously produced, helping researchers avoid the trap of invoking movements, like exogenous shocks, as a deus ex machina.

MOVEMENTS FROM OUTSIDE INSTITUTIONS: CHALLENGER/DOMINANCE APPROACHES

One way to integrate movements into institutional research preserves the analytical distinction between movements, contestation and deliberate mobilization, on the one hand, and institutional processes like the reproduction of taken-for-granted practices, on the other, taking movements as an ‘extra-institutional’ force that impacts change or new path creation. This approach hardly exhausts possible relations between movements and institutions. But it captures the wide class of cases where movements arise outside of or on the peripheries of established fields, acting as outsiders/challengers to assert new visions of order, disrupt existing systems, or secure representation or policies from established authorities (Fligstein and McAdam 2012). Thinking in these terms also extends the institutional framework to highlight processes left exogenous by existing accounts of emergence and change, opening up a black-box of ‘pre-institutional’ dynamics, and adding new imageries and mechanisms to our conceptual repertoire.
Consider two canonical formulations in neo-institutional analysis. In the two-stage model of institutionalization, the emergence of fields is a ‘bottom-up’ phenomenon: (1) organizations or states adopt structures or policies in response to local problems, politics or characteristics, which then spark (2) processes of mimesis, theorization and diffusion, eventually crystallizing a broader community of practice around a core set of principles or models (Tolbert and Zucker 1983; Baron et al. 1986; Galaskiewicz and Wasserman 1989; Strang and Chang 1993; Schofer and Meyer 2005). As solutions diffuse, they become taken-for-granted as an accepted norm, serving as baselines to which organizations must subsequently conform as a condition for legitimacy. In punctuated equilibrium models, change occurs as a sequence of shock, disruption, deinstitutionalization and reinstitutionalization (Edelman 1990, 2006; Fligstein 1990, 2001; Sutton et al. 1994; Sutton and Dobbin 1996). Shocks like new laws or court rulings subvert existing routines, vested interests and established understandings, evoking uncertainty, sense-making and a succession of players and models as new groups emerge to define the situation and establish their solutions as new bases of order.

Both models shed light on key institutional processes: (1) mutual monitoring, mimesis and the diffusion or transposition of practices across organizations; (2) theorization, codification or the endorsement of best practices by professional associations; and (3) interventions by states to ratify, redraw or reject field boundaries and emerging solutions (e.g., Strang and Meyer 1993). Yet both tend to neglect the origins of new ideas and practices as well as the sources of disruption, leaving key players and processes unanalyzed. However, in many canonical cases featuring isomorphism, the instigating shocks or motivations for adoption were the direct and deliberate results of social movements – municipal reformers and progressives fighting corruption in city government, civil rights activists demanding state intervention to end discrimination and agrarian populists contesting corporate consolidation.

Schneiberg and Soule’s (2005) study of rate regulation in insurance develops one model of the role of movements in the institutionalization process, revising canonical accounts. It conceptualizes institutions as political settlements. Moreover, it analyzes path creation as a contested process grounded in sequences of mobilization, disruption and conventional institutional dynamics, tracing how mobilization outside established channels catalyzes path creation and change. Specifically, their study shows how rate regulation by American states in the early twentieth century was sparked neither by exogenous shocks, nor by scattered and unconnected politics or problem-solving behavior, but rather by anti-corporate movements who worked to contest corporate consolidation and assert alternative forms of economic order. Mobilizing in response to ‘trusts’ and ‘combines’, the Grange, Farmers Alliance and other groups directly opposed ‘corporate liberal’ models of order based on for-profit corporations, national markets and unregulated industry. Instead, they pursued ‘producer republican’ logics that envisioned American capitalism as a regionally decentralized and cooperatively organized economy of independent producers, farmers and self-governing towns. And in targeting insurance, Grangers and other groups secured anti-trust laws to break up the ‘insurance trust’, organized consumer-owned mutual firms, and otherwise disrupted insurance markets, fueling legitimacy crises, public hearings and new interventions within key states.

These disruptions and interventions, in turn, sparked politics and conventional institutional processes within the insurance field. They evoked inter-state diffusion in which key players monitored other states, theorized rate regulation as a solution to the ‘insurance problem’, recombined elements to forge those solutions and adopted laws passed by other states. They also evoked supra-state
or field-wide process in which courts and the professions endorsed regulation, promulgated model laws, and built field-wide administrative organs. Taken together, these institutional processes shifted the balance of power within states, crystallizing insurance around economic models and regulatory solutions that settled political struggles over industry governance (see also Schneiberg 1999, 2002; Schneiberg and Bartley 2001).

Rao, Clemens, Hoffman and recent work on contemporary anti-corporate mobilization also go beyond canonical accounts by foregrounding movements, understanding paths as political settlements, or analyzing path creation as sequences of movements, mobilization and institutional processes. Rao (1998) shows how the consumer watchdog agencies and product rating schemes that are now taken-for-granted were the product of consumer mobilization and contestation over whether scientific testing and the power of informed consumers should be blended with the role of labor, unionization and concerns about production. At first, consumer groups fought for two different logics of reform, one that blended consumer advocacy with unionism and one that focused more narrowly on the consumer. But broader political dynamics eliminated the more comprehensive radical change frame from the path, segregating ‘consumer’ and ‘worker’, and ensuring the dominance of a consumer-only impartial testing logic (see Carruthers and Babb 1996 for a similar analysis of monetary systems).

Clemens and Hoffman more directly address how change flows from combinations of movements and institutional processes. For Clemens (1993, 1997), interest group politics became a core feature of the American polity through successive waves of mobilization and transposition by three outsider/challenger groups. Acting collectively to contest parties and patronage, first unions, then farmers and then women’s groups built on previous efforts to disrupt existing arrangements (strikes, boycotts, protests) by transposing fraternals, cooperatives, clubs and other kinds of apolitical associations into mainstream politics. These sequences of actions fundamentally altered the terms of political representation and influence, creating access and clout for previously dis-enfranchised groups and institutionalizing lobbying, legislative monitoring, and other now taken-for-granted modes of American politics. For Hoffman (1999), movements and institutional dynamics play pivotal roles in field creation and change in contemporary environmentalism. Conflicts over competing institutions and successive rounds of environmental mobilization, scandal and legislative activity provoked new forms of discourse, theorization and new patterns of interactions among firms, non-profits and governments. These dynamics, in turn, helped produce an increasingly structured environmental field.

Work on contemporary anti-corporate politics has likewise located change in sequences or combination of mobilization and institutional processes, paying growing attention to movement disruption of firms and how corporations engage in non-market strategies to appease activists, fueling diffusion of reforms and new practices (Bartley 2007; Briscoe and Safford 2008; Soule 2009; King and Pearce 2011; Vasi and King 2012; De Bakker et al. 2013; McDonnell and King 2013; McDonnell et al. 2015; Vasi et al. 2015; Hiatt et al. 2015). King and Soule (2007) importantly show how protestors are effective in driving down a firm’s stock price when they target issues dealing with critical stakeholder groups such as workers and consumers. In response to these and other threats to their reputations and bottom lines, firms have borrowed, transposed and embraced corporate social responsibility practices, domestic partner benefits and the like (Briscoe and Safford 2008; Soule 2009). They have also collaborated with non-profit groups in organizing and diffusing private governance systems and now ubiquitous rating and ranking schemes (Bartley 2007), while becoming more sophisticated in counter-mobilization efforts including astroturfing strategies by
corporations to create impressions of grassroots support for a policy or product (Walker 2014; Walker and Rea 2014). This has stimulated important research on elite mobilization (Soule 2009; Ingram et al. 2010; Zald and Lounsbury 2010; Rao et al. 2011; Yue 2015).

As a group, these studies substantially revise canonical accounts of path creation and change. First, they support a view of institutions as settlements of political struggles over the character of fields fueled by the mobilization of challengers around competing projects and logics (Davis and Thompson 1994; Fligstein 1996; Armstrong 2005; McAdam and Scott 2005). Emphasizing contestation and collective action, this view departs from ‘cooler’ imageries of paths as based in diffusion, taken-for-granted practice, theorization and normative endorsement by professions or states. Thus, insurance rate regulation represented a political solution of struggles between insurers, who pursued economic logics of corporations, markets and unregulated industry associations, and challenger groups, who sought anti-trust laws, regulation and mutual alternatives to promote more decentralized and cooperatively organized economies. Conflicts over these visions yielded structural innovations, but were not resolved until field members crafted packages that combined regulation with private association, and mutuals with for-profit corporations. The consumer advocacy field likewise reflected a settlement of struggles and mobilization around competing logics, albeit one that involved a clear-cut victory of one logic of consumerism over another.

Second, these studies suggest an image of the process of institutionalization as a sequence or combination between contestation and mobilization around alternative visions of order, on the one hand, and more conventional institutional dynamics, on the other. In insurance, challengers mobilized outside the system to contest the ‘insurance combine’ and impose alternative forms and anti-trust policies on the industry. Regulators and reformers within the field responded, in turn, by theorizing, endorsing and diffusing regulatory policies that recombined multiple forms into new packages. Similarly, farmers, unions and women’s groups reconstructed the American state via successive waves of mobilization, contestation and translation, much like contemporary anti-corporate activists did for neoliberal governance, with successive mobilizations sparking the theorization and diffusion of corporate social responsibility and private governance.

Third, these studies provide a more varied understanding of how movements fuel path creation and change by mobilizing outside established channels to contest extant systems. At a minimum, by introducing multiple logics and promoting awareness of problems, challenger movements subvert the taken-for-grantedness of existing arrangements, fueling legitimacy crises and institutional politics (Stryker 2000), and providing insiders with cultural resources for criticism, reflexive action or ‘mindful deviation’ (Garud and Karnoe 2001). Thus, as anti-corporate forces, consumers and women’s groups took action and asserted new logics, they not only evoked media attention and public debate, creating openings for challengers and reformers to delegitimate dominant institutional systems. They also supplied experts, reformers and other groups with models and cultural resources for criticizing and revising extant paths such as by combining or layering them with new forms and elements.

Challenger movements can likewise introduce new organizational forms into fields, working outside established channels to build parallel, alternative systems of organization, including craft breweries (Carroll and Swaminathan 2000), nouvelle cuisine (Rao et al. 2003), mutual and cooperative enterprises (Schneiberg 2002) and community-based, non-profit recycling centers (Lounsbury et al. 2003; see also Clemens 1997; Rao et al. 2000). These efforts may not be disruptive in intent. Yet promoting alternative forms can foster new competitive dynamics and populate fields with instances
of new logics, with quite disruptive effects. By translating apolitical forms of association into state, agrarians, unions and women’s groups altered both the terms of competition in American politics and prevailing conceptions of appropriate political action. By promulgating mutual insurance, Grangers and other groups instantiated cooperativism and transformed the terms of competition in a key sector, forcing insurance corporations to engage in new forms of rivalry based on prevention, re-engineering and loss reduction. By introducing the science based, not-for-profit product testing agency, the consumer movement transformed the terms of trade throughout the economy, as in an odd twist did contemporary anti-corporate activists, whose efforts helped fuel the spread of rating and ranking, corporate self-regulation, and other forms of private governance, laying key foundations for a neoliberal order.

Finally, challenger movements can spark path creation and change by quite directly and deliberately disrupting existing arrangements (e.g., den Hond and de Bakker 2007; van Wijk et al. 2013; Bertels et al. 2014). They can mobilize masses, networks and political support to pressure states and other power centers for new agencies, laws and policies that ban or mandate practices, producing uncertainties or prohibitions associated with new laws, agencies and mandates that profoundly destabilize existing systems, fueling sustained institutional dynamics (Fligstein 1990; Edelman 1992; Dobbin and Dowd 1997; Hoffman 1999). And like ACT UP and Earth First!, challenges from without can and do use protests, boycotts and direct actions to dramatize problems and directly disrupt daily operations and routines (Elsbach and Sutton 1992; Hoffman 1999; King and Soule 2007; King 2008). Challenger movements can scale up their efforts and impact by constructing and participating in field-configuring events (Maguire et al. 2004; Hardy and Maguire 2008; Lampel and Meyer 2008). In all of these ways, movements and counter-movements can fuel path creation and change as political-cultural forces for contestation, confrontation and disruption. Instantiating new logics, they can evoke controversy and debate within fields, conflicts and policy responses within organizations, inter-organizational diffusion and field-wide association, while supplying insiders and reformers with templates, political support and cultural resources for theorization, transposition, recombination and the assembly of new institutions.

Simple in its essentials, a conception that emphasizes sequences of outsider movements, mobilization and institutional processes has supported increasingly sophisticated analyses of path creation and change. As we show in section 3, a ‘movements from outside institutions’ conception lends itself readily to multilevel analyses of fields, and to consideration of how existing institutions or political opportunity structures shape challengers’ capacities to mobilize and effect change. Yet this conception does not exhaust the ways that movements figure as agents of path creation and change.

MOVEMENTS WITHIN INSTITUTIONS: COLLECTIVE MOBILIZATION AS INSTITUTIONAL PROCESS

Groups seeking change often mobilize collectively outside established institutions to assert new logics and disrupt taken-for-granted arrangements. Yet institutionalists have recognized movements also arise within institutions or fields, mobilizing insiders and well as outsiders, using established networks and resources to diffuse alternative practices, and drawing effectively on existing institutional elements and models to craft new systems (see Fligstein 1996, 2001). Indeed, while movements can drive change by directly opposing existing schemes, generating legitimacy crises or otherwise disrupting institutions, they sometimes promote path creation and change incrementally by
engaging in institutional processes (or becoming institutional forces). That is, movements can emerge and operate within established channels and power structures, drawing on existing institutions and taken-for-granted understandings to theorize, articulate and combine new projects or practices with prevailing models and arrangements. In so doing, movements may themselves become vehicles or established channels for diffusion, theorization, recombination and other institutional processes within fields.

This broader conception of movements risks a loss of analytical specificity and a diminished focus on contesting power structures, especially where movements become synonymous with collective or quasi-collective action geared toward any type of change (Scully and Segal 2002; Scully and Creed 2005). Yet as suggested above, analyzing movements as intra-institutional forces productively blurs distinctions between ‘extra-institutional’ and ‘institutional’, ‘mobilization’ and ‘self-reproducing’ processes, or ‘contentious’ versus ‘conventional’ politics. It has led to new insights about parallels between institutional phenomena and collective action processes studied by movement scholars (Wade et al. 1998; Campbell 2005; Davis and Zald 2005; Strang and Jung 2005). It has led to new understandings of the relations between movements, institutions and organizations, including how institutional reproduction and diffusion depend on mobilization, political resources and contestation (Thelen 2004; Weber et al. 2008; Sine and Lee 2009). It supports research that goes beyond analyzing movements as ‘extra-institutional’ producers of multiple logics to consider also how movements and contestation are products of – and mobilize – contradictions and multiple logics or models within fields (Strkyer 2000; Seo and Creed 2002; Morrill 2006). Indeed, it has let institutionalists interested in movements supplement images of change as disruption, conflict and settlement with analyses of how movements also work in an incremental and embedded fashion, producing trajectories of path creation or change as reconfiguration, recombination or layering (Clemens and Cook 1999; Streeck and Thelen 2005; Schneiberg 2007). It also opens up possibilities for understanding trajectories of outsider challengers moving inside fields and organizations, and the emergence of tempered radicals working from within to refashion organizational policies via more conventional means (Meyerson and Scully 1995).

Lounsbury and colleagues’ studies of recycling address how movements can enter into and operate within fields and organizations as institutional forces, emphasizing their role as agents of theorization, classification, and the diffusion of codified arguments, frames or theoretical resources (Lounsbury 2001, 2005: Lounsbury et al. 2003). Initially, eco-activists pursued recycling outside established channels, working independently against the waste industry to organize thousands of local non-profit, drop-off recycling centers. These were part of a broader project to restructure capitalism. They were articulated within a holistic frame that theorized recycling as a way to rebuild community, create local closed-loop production and consumption, and reduce community dependence on conglomerates and capitalist commodity systems. Yet the commitment of industry and state agencies to a resource recovery logic that emphasized landfill, waste-to-energy programs and large-scale incineration left the recycling movement isolated and its centers without outlets for materials.

In fact, a viable infrastructure for recycling did not emerge until activists, working through the National Recycling Coalition, entered mainstream policy negotiations, forged ties with solid waste handlers, and rethorized recycling as a for-profit service that built on curb-side programs and complemented landfills and incineration. Coupled with grass-roots mobilization against new incinerators, and negotiations with state agencies to buy recycled materials, theorizing recyclables as commodities transformed
cultural beliefs and discourse about waste in the industry, creating institutional conditions for diffusing recycling practices (see also Strang and Meyer 1993; King et al. 2005).

In addition, environmental movements served as institutional forces by operating inside organizations (see Zald and Berger 1978 for an early statement). The Student Environmental Action Coalition promoted recycling within universities by codifying arguments, building inter­collegiate networks and disseminating standardized arguments and facts about similar programs elsewhere. And the College and University Recycling Coordinators provided universities and colleges with standards and classification schemes for measuring the progress, costs and benefits of programs, which helped deepen discourse and theorization of recycling as a rational economic activity. Thus, as Greenwood, Suddaby and Hinings (2002) document for professional associations, social movements can create cultural and theoretical foundations for new activities, forms and fields. They can operate within existing power structures as agents of theorization, classification and diffusion, and can themselves become infrastructures for those processes within fields. Indeed, as recycling became institutionalized, the movement itself blurred into professional association­alism. Activists became recycling employees; employees used the National Recycling Coalition to form a professional association; and the association forged new identities, statuses and procedures for recycling managers within the new field.

Research by Morrill, Creed, Scully and colleagues, and Moore on the institutional­ization of alternative dispute resolution, domestic partner benefits and public science likewise document how movements operate as forces within mainstream institutions, de­emphasizing confrontational tactics in favor of their role as mobilizers of multiple logics and as agents or vehicles for recombina­tion, assembly, translation and diffusion. In Morrill’s (2006) study of alternative dispute resolution (ADR), mobilization for alternatives and contestation themselves rested fundamentally on the presence and re­combination of multiple logics of practice in the socio­legal field. In this case, institutional processes of bricolage, hybridization and innovation preceded broader mobilization. Lawyers, social workers, community activists and judges working at the interstices or overlaps between fields during the 1960s drew in an ad hoc fashion on therapeutic techniques, community mediation and other forms of non­adversarial negotiating and group discussion to help process minor disputes in small claims, family and other courts. As the ‘litigation crisis’ deepened, these early efforts supported the mobilization of two competing critical masses of ADR activists – one around a ‘community mediation’ model, the other around the ‘multi­door courthouse’.

Both groups devoted considerable energy into theorizing and disseminating their approach, holding conferences, publishing manifestos in prominent law journals and seeking support from foundation or other established centers. Both also worked hard to articulate and recombine their models with prevailing models and institutions, including the ‘Great Society’ vision of federally funded community social programs and the increasingly ascendant new federalism. Moreover, once advocates could articulate ADR with the divorce revolution and no­fault divorce as a non­adversarial solution to custody and interpersonal problems, they gained a lever for professionalizing mediation and diffusing its practices. They used conferences, new organizations, instructional videos, newsletters and the like to further codify and disseminate ADR, effectively layering ADR into the legal system as an increasingly taken­for­granted complement to conventional legal arrangements.

Creed, Scully and colleagues’ studies of gay rights/LGBT activists shed additional light on how movements working within existing institutions can help establish new practices by exploiting contradiction and
multiple logics, importing or redeploying logics across settings, and articulating or recombining new elements with prevailing models, myths or concerns (Creed and Scully 2000; Creed et al. 2002; Scully and Segal 2002; Scully and Creed 2005; see also Raeburn 2004). Decisive here were activists’ use of contradiction and recombination to disturb taken-for-granted assumptions, highlight injustice, and legitimate claims for reform. For example, activists strategically deployed identity in face-to-face encounters with co-workers and supervisors. They used casual mentions of partners’ gendered names when sharing experiences of mundane activities and enacted non-stereotypical behavior to challenge stigma. They also employed narratives of discrimination or inequality to highlight hypocrisies, evoking understandings that everyday routines produce injustice, and activating listeners’ identities as non-prejudiced persons.

In addition, activists used their knowledge and status as insiders and loyal corporate citizens to couch reforms like domestic partner benefits as good business practice or expressions of firms’ espoused commitments to diversity. Furthermore, like those fighting for the federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act, activists within firms imported higher order logics or frames, articulating domestic partner benefits and other gay friendly policies with broader civil rights frames, values of fairness and equality, corporate social responsibility, and concerns with competitiveness in an increasingly diverse world. In a sense, LGBT movements worked for change by simultaneously coming out and fitting in; that is, by carefully articulating and combining difference, assertions of LGBT identity and new practices with ‘normal’ everyday life, insider identities as dutiful corporate citizens, and ongoing organizational concerns. Here too, diffusion of new practices like domestic partner benefits was a political process, resting on mobilization, contestation, framing and the recombination of prevailing models and cultural elements in and across firms.

As Moore shows, the institutionalization of public science organizations in American politics also rested critically on multiple logics, mobilization by insiders and the role of movements as bricoleuer-agents of recombination and redeployment (Moore 1996, 2013; Moore and Hala 2002). During the 1960s and 1970s, university scientists faced increasingly severe contradictions between the logic of public service or social utility, on the one hand, and the logics of objectivity, non-partisanship and detachment as scientists, on the other. In fact, extant ways of joining science and politics – serving the public interest by serving the state – had become distinct liabilities. University scientists not only faced attacks by anti-war and environmental groups for their connections to the military and chemical industry, they also began to criticize themselves and their peers for these connections.

At first, activists tried to link science and politics and mobilize for change within established science associations. But mixing partisanship and ‘pure science’ produced public discord within the scientific community and directly challenged its legitimacy as an impartial, objective producer of facts. This led scientist-activists to create a hybrid form – the public science organization – that resolved this tension by recombining science and politics in novel ways. Through dedicated organizations like the Union for Concerned Scientists and Scientists’ Institute for Public Information, scientists could provide nuclear safety information, challenge non-scientists’ uses of science and address the public interest without risking their credibility as scientists by acting in openly partisan ways. Moreover, hybrid organizations separate from professional and political associations provided activists with a vehicle for public science that directed attention away from the inner workings of the scientific community, letting scientists mobilize politically without calling their legitimacy as scientists into question or sparking conflict within professional communities.
All of these studies highlight rich opportunities for exploring the role of movements within existing institutions and organizations. In general, social life is rife with collective mobilization, and whether these efforts are made by challengers working as outsiders to redefine existing arrangements, insiders seeking change from within, or elites striving to keep existing structures intact (Fligstein 1990, 1996), a focus on movements expands our understanding of institutional dynamics. Moreover, mobilization can occur at the level of the field as with anti-corporate forces or ecological activists promoting communitarian alternatives to corporate capitalism and with scientists forging new associations to link expertise to politics. Or it can occur within and between organizations as recycling advocates pressed for more substantive forms of recycling or as gay and lesbian groups pushed for recognition and benefits. A focus on movements, therefore, sheds new light on path creation and change, particularly when it attends to the multilevel character of the institutional context.

To be sure, the distinction between movements operating outside and inside fields raises questions for future work about their different enabling conditions, trajectories or effects. Insiders will likely pursue different tactics and forms of contestation than outsider groups. They will likely mobilize collectively in different ways, frame problems and solutions differently, and differentially negotiate or exploit structures, networks and institutional frames provided by established fields. They may also be more likely to err on the conservative side. Conversely, outsiders pursuing disruptive activities face legitimacy dilemmas that may pressure them to mobilize as insiders, articulate their projects with existing institutional logics, or form separate, decoupled organizations for disruptive and conventional action (Elsbach and Sutton 1992). As we suggest in section 4, we can also profitably consider how outsider and insider movements occur in waves or sequences, producing historical trajectories of change. Fortunately, future work on both kinds of movements can exploit existing research on how institutional contexts more generally shape mobilization and movement efficacy.

INSTITUTIONAL FIELDS AS CONTEXTS FOR MOVEMENTS

While the work just described provides rich depictions of movements as agents of institutional creation and change, analysts of ‘outsider’ and ‘insider’ movements have also paid careful attention to the institutional context of social movements. They have not only begun to theorize how multiple logics within fields can motivate contestation and collective action (Stryker 2000; Seo and Creed 2002; Morrill 2006; Marquis and Lounsbury 2007), but have also considered how existing institutional contexts shape mobilization and movements’ capacities for producing change. Addressing relations between movements, institutional contexts and outcomes lays the foundation for more sophisticated analyses of power and agency. It lets scholars go beyond simple power elite or interest group arguments about agency and change to consider how extant institutions block access, provide challengers with levers and openings, and otherwise condition actors’ ability to translate numbers, resources or organization into change. Moreover, in exploring relations between movements, contexts and outcomes, institutionalists have made good use of research on political opportunity structure (McAdam 1982, 1999; Tarrow 1998) and related arguments about institutional mediation (Amenta and Zylan 1991; Amenta et al. 1992) and institutional contingency (Thornton and Occasio 1999; Bartley and Schneiberg 2002; Lounsbury 2007), supporting a deepening integration of movements research and neo-institutional analysis.

Work at this interface has identified various features of institutional and political fields that condition movement dynamics.
or success. These include the legacies of prior policies, divisions among elites and the receptivity of institutional authorities toward challengers’ claims, the concentration of resources within a field, and the prevalence of certain cultural models. Work on contexts has also shown how the multilevel character of fields provides openings for challengers, and how movements evoke counter-movements within fields.

Davis and colleagues’ studies of shareholder movements nicely document how success can hinge on the institutional context (Davis and Thompson 1994; Davis and Greve 1997; Vogus and Davis 2005). During the 1980s, shareholder activists mobilized to promote new conceptions of the corporation, transform markets for corporate control and break managers’ hold over large US firms. They formed new organizations, launched takeover actions and used existing governance machinery to oust entrenched managers, relying on their considerable material resources and connections. Yet activists’ ability to translate resources into change was institutionally mediated. The concentration of assets held by institutional investors provided shareholder activists with critical leverage in firm-level conflicts with management over the control of corporations. Review by the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) of proxy rules weakened managers’ control over votes and signaled a favorable regulatory stance toward shareholders and reform. State governments dependent on franchise fees for incorporation were reluctant to alienate shareholder groups by passing anti-takeover statutes that would deprive them of a key weapon.

Soule and her colleagues likewise trace how the ability of the women’s movement to secure equal rights amendments from American states rested on political and institutional opportunity structures (Soule and Olzak 2004; Soule and King 2006). Mobilization for equal rights amendments was more likely to result in ratification in states with a high level of electoral competitiveness, histories of civil rights legislation and favorable (Democratic) allies in power. It was also more effective in public opinion climates where new conceptions of women’s roles in private and public spheres prevailed.

Particularly noteworthy here are findings that public opinion climates enhance prospects for movements, which point beyond traditional realist formulations about political opportunity structure to consider how culture shapes mobilization and change. As research on environmentalism has highlighted, institutionalized models or logics can be potent cultural resources for mobilization, framing and change. Shifts in the recycling field from a radical, holistic logic to a technocratic logic facilitated the creation of recycling advocacy groups in urban regions to contest waste management through incineration (Lounsbury 2005). More broadly, the diffusion of environmentalism as a global blueprint for the nation-state has enhanced the capacity of domestic environmental activists to organize and slow environmental degradation (Frank et al. 2000; Hironaka and Schofer 2002; Schofer and Hironaka 2005). Formal mechanisms (e.g., impact assessments) and the prevalence globally of environmentalism as a valued cultural model have legitimated environmental movements, fueling organization, while creating rhetorical and procedural opportunities for activists to point out failures and pursue legal actions.

Studies of movements and institutional contexts have also documented how the multilevel and segmented character of institutions can create opportunities for movements. The multilevel nature of fields is central to institutionalist imageries of context (Scott 1994, 2001; Scott et al. 2000; Schneiberg and Clemens 2006), and bears directly on movements’ capacities to produce change in organizations, states and nation-states. As Davis and colleagues’ analyses of shareholder activism show, challengers sometimes have to mobilize simultaneously at multiple levels to assert new models and effect change (Davis...
and Greve 1997; Davis and Thompson 1994; Vogus and Davis 2005). Shareholder groups were mainly interested in promoting new conceptions of the corporation and contesting entrenched management at the firm ('lower order') level. But they quickly found that they also had to take the fight to the state and federal level. Influencing these 'higher order' units was essential for challengers' ability to make change, since state and federal laws set the terms for mobilization and access at the firm-level, defining rules for proxy systems, takeovers and whether shareholders could act collectively. By blocking anti-takeover legislation, securing new proxy rules and so on, shareholder activism at state and federal levels created critical opportunities for mobilization against and within corporations.

Multilevel institutions similarly created opportunities for anti-corporate groups to regulate insurance rates in the American states in the early twentieth century (Schneiberg 1999; Schneiberg and Bartley 2001; Schneiberg and Soule 2005). Challengers seeking to contest insurance corporations were largely closed out of policy making and had little leverage for their regulatory ambitions in New York, Connecticut and other centers of the 'insurance trust'. But, agrarian states proved more open to populist pressures, which let challengers shift venues sideways and enact statist regulatory measures in Texas and Kansas, disrupting the insurance field. Insurers tried to close off access entirely by mobilizing sideways and up, suing in state and federal courts to void states' rights to regulate insurance prices. Yet, that strategy backfired when advocates of regulation found an unexpected ally in the US Supreme Court, which ruled that insurance was 'affected with a public interest' and thus subject to the states’ authority, providing activists with venues with leverage to win rate regulation laws in a range of states.

Indeed, the multilevel character of institutions can also create possibilities for movements for coupling field-level and intra-organizational mobilization with the characteristics of organizations serving as opportunity structures that shape the capacities of movements within organizations to produce change. Ecological activists were better able to gain footholds for securing full-blown recycling programs at larger colleges and universities with more resources, selective colleges with histories of activism and universities with environmental majors that could serve as local allies or institutional conduits for field-level pressures (Lounsbury 2001; see also King 2008).

Multilevel contexts can even create possibilities for coupling national organizing with mobilizing up, transnationally, and down, with transnational structures containing opportunity structures for pressuring states and corporation for change. Developing hand in hand with neoliberalism and ‘the decline of the state’ has been considerable organizing at the transnational level, including the proliferation of rights discourses, new models of order, associations, governance schemes, standard-setting organizations, conferences and advocacy networks (Meyer et al. 1997; Boli and Thomas 1999; Djelic and Quack 2003; Djelic and Sahlin-Andersson 2006; Bartley 2007; Smith 2008). Such structures and cultural models can serve as platforms for mobilization, providing environmental, anti-sweatshop and civil rights activists with leverage in the form of globally accepted prescriptions, environmental impact statements, transnational certification schemes, international exposure and the like to place new pressures on firms and nations-states (e.g., Skretny 2002; Bartley 2007; Hironaka 2014). They can also serve as platforms for sustaining movements when access and mobilization within nations are blocked, providing activists venues outside nation-states to organize, develop networks, arguments and allies, and with opportunities to mobilize attention, criticism and allies transnationally to exert pressures downward on intransigent targets (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Alfinito Vierira and Quack 2016).

Finally, researchers attending to context have also found that outcomes are shaped by
whether or not initial movements catalyze counter-movements within fields. Vogus and Davis’ (2005) study of anti-takeover legislation takes one step in this direction by analyzing how managerial and local elites counter-organized in response to shareholder activism that protected corporate managers from raiders and hostile takeovers. Soule and colleagues’ analyses go one step further. In analyzing states’ adoption of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), they simultaneously include variables for the presence or strength of women’s movement groups (NOW and AAUW) and anti-ERA organizations (Soule and Olzak 2004; Soule and King 2006; see also Soule 2004 on anti-hate crime laws). Ingram and Rao (2004) also address movements and counter-movements, but elaborate a different research strategy, analyzing the passage and repeal of legislation banning chain stores to get at populist mobilization and chain store counter-mobilization over the rise of new market forms. In this way also the capacities of movements to promote change or new path creation rests not just on size, resources or movement strength, but also on the structures – and dynamics – of the political and institutional context.

**SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND NEO-INSTITUTIONAL THEORY: FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

We conclude our review by discussing new frontiers for analyzing combinations, interactions and sequences of institutional process and social movements as sources of path creation and change. Future work, we suggest, can and should attend more carefully to key methodological issues of measurement and modeling. It can also fruitfully consider three substantive issues: how movements produce change as political conditions for diffusion; how opportunity structures characterized by institutional heterogeneity, multiple institutions or overlapping fields shape movements’ abilities to translate resources into change; and how movements and institutions co-evolve historically, shaping one another over time. Thinking historically and contextually foregrounds how movements are endogenously produced and always institutionally conditioned. Such an approach captures the substantial benefits of introducing contestation and collective action into institutional analysis. But it does so while avoiding the traps of either invoking movements as extra-institutional forces or simply using movements to assert agency and abandon institutional context entirely. Such an approach, in other words, engages, rather than avoids, the paradoxes of embeddedness and analytical impasses involved in explaining path creation and change (Seo and Creed 2002; Schneiberg 2007). We begin with a discussion of methodological issues, and then emphasize three major substantive categories for future research – the outcomes of movements, heterogeneity and field overlap and the origins of institutions and movements.

**Measuring and Modeling Movements**

Much work on movements from a neo-institutional perspective has relied on qualitative and historical methods, playing to those methods’ strengths in theory construction and producing a rich body of theory and thick description. Supplementing qualitative work with multivariate quantitative research can not only help systematize theory construction in important ways, it can also help clarify causal relations, isolate effects and strengthen inferences about movement emergence and outcomes.

There are substantial methodological challenges involved in documenting movement effects on path creation and change, challenges that literally multiply as researchers address the moderating influence of existing institutional contexts. At a minimum,
documenting effects depends on credibly measuring movement development, strength and activity. Existing research linking movements, organizations and institutions has made real progress here, using the presence of movement organizations or chapters, counts of movement organizations and the number of movement members and chapters to document movement emergence and strength (e.g., Lounsbury 2001; Schneiberg 2002; Soule and King 2006; Schneiberg et al. 2008; Lee and Lounsbury 2015). Future work can also tap such effects by measuring protests and other movement activity, or by using newspaper coverage, public hearings or other measures of controversy to assess whether movements have been able to force issues or new conceptions on the public agenda or call existing arrangements into question (e.g., King and Soule 2007).

Documenting movement effects also rests critically on using multivariate approaches to isolate the effects of movement strength or activity, mobilizing structures, framing and institutional or political opportunity structures (e.g., Vogus and Davis 2005). Absent multivariate designs or careful comparative analysis, inferences about movement effects on change remain vulnerable to counter-claims about spurious relations. Attending explicitly to multiple factors is also particularly important for addressing how existing institutions and opportunity structures enhance or undermine movements’ capacities for influence, disruption and new path creation. Research on institutions or opportunity structures sometimes analyzes these factors additively. But whether made by movement scholars or neo-institutionalists, arguments about political opportunity and institutional mediation are fundamentally arguments about interaction effects (Thornton and Occasio 1999; Bartley and Schneiberg 2002; Schneiberg and Clemens 2006). They are arguments that political or institutional configurations amplify or blunt the effects of movement numbers, resources or activities on policies, paths and change. And they can be implemented empirically in straightforward ways (Amenta and Zylan 1991; Amenta et al. 1992; Schneiberg 2002; Soule 2004; Soule and Olzak 2004).

Mobilization Outcomes: Movements, Politics and Diffusion

A second, more substantive direction for future research revisits the relationship between collective mobilization and diffusion, and reconsiders how movements operate as political forces in promoting the spread of alternatives. Institutionalists have addressed numerous cases of diffusion. Yet the spread of innovations and new forms via conventional institutional dynamics of diffusion, emulation and theorization can spark resistance and counter-mobilization by those unfamiliar with new practices and by powerful vested interests threatened by novel practices (Djelic 1998; Fiss and Zajac 2004; Schneiberg and Soule 2005; Sanders and Tuschke 2007). Such counter-attacks can be covert or openly political, involving the use of state power, and can hinder, halt or even reverse the diffusion of new forms. Under these conditions, diffusion is a contested political process, and the unfolding of canonical diffusion processes may depend on whether or not innovators or advocates can muster political support to place and keep alternatives on the agenda (Schneiberg 2013; also King et al. 2005; Soule and King 2006). Under these conditions, dynamics of diffusion, exposure and emulation depend on supporters’ abilities to mobilize sufficient power and resources to secure authorizing legislation, defend alternatives politically, and so on. Under these conditions, diffusing practices are vulnerable to substantial modification and editing as they travel (Czarniawksa and Joerges 1996; Campbell 2004; Sahlin and Wedlin 2008).

Djelic’s analysis of the diffusion of American mass production across Europe after World War II, and Schneiberg’s study
of the diffusion of cooperatives across states and industries in the United States take two steps toward documenting these relations between diffusion and mobilization. As Djelic (1998) shows, key conditions and conduits for the diffusion of American corporate organization were fully in place after 1945, including crisis and the discrediting of European models, the undisputed triumph and legitimation of American models of economic organization, developed networks between the United States and European policy makers, and extensive theorization of the efficiencies of the vertically integrated firm. Yet with efforts via the Marshall Plan to transpose the American model into Europe sometimes blocked by counter-mobilization by unions and business, conventional diffusion dynamics only unfolded in countries where modernizing elites were able to avoid or overcome resistance. Schneiberg (2013) builds on this notion, documenting first that conventional diffusion dynamics of prevalence, exposure and emulation did fuel the spread of cooperative forms across states and industries. Exposure, proximity and prevalence effects mattered, with cooperatives spreading more extensively in states as they became increasingly common in surrounding states, and in industries as they increasingly populated related industries. Yet with corporations organizing in markets and politics to prevent contagion and break links between senders and receivers, prevalence effects and the diffusion of cooperatives across states and industries depended ultimately on effective mobilization by Grangers and anti-corporate forces to defend these forms. Here, movements matter not just as a promoter, theorizer or assembler of frames and new forms, but also as an accumulator of political power – as a bridge or amplifier for diffusion, theorization and the like – and thus an essential political condition for diffusion (see also Briscoe et al. 2015).

Considering movements as political conditions for diffusion revises conventional views of the relationship between movements, institutions and outcomes. Political opportunity structure arguments emphasize how existing institutional structures condition the effects of movements and mobilization on policies and change. Here, politics and power are institutionally contingent (Amenta et al. 1992; Thornton and Occasio 1999; Schneiberg and Bartley 2001). As institutional systems become more open to challengers or provide them with elite allies, movements’ abilities to translate conventional resources into desired outcomes will increase. Favorable institutional contexts amplify the effect of movement numbers, organizations or resources on change outcomes.

Conceptualizing movements as political forces for diffusion inverts this logic, suggesting that institutional dynamics of diffusion are politically contingent. Whether or not actors can adopt, borrow or translate novel forms depends on the capacities of movements to amass political resources, defend novel forms against counter-attacks, and make or break favorable political contexts for the spread of alternatives. Here, canonical institutional effects depend on movement power. Generally speaking, the likelihood of an organization adopting a new practice increases as professional communities endorse the practice and the number of prior adopters increase. Professional endorsement and increased prevalence of practices increase exposure, familiarity and legitimacy. But, where novel forms are subject to contestation, diffusion will require the mobilization of numbers, resources or organization to defend and protect these alternatives. Absent mobilization, endorsement or prior adoption may have little or no effect on subsequent adoption. Yet as champions of alternatives mobilize and shift the balance of power, endorsement and prior adoption can have increasingly powerful effects on subsequent adoption, translation or other institutional processes.

While, our knowledge of how movements create favorable political contexts for the diffusion and translation of alternatives is
relatively undeveloped, future research can draw on both a multilevel perspective and existing strategies for modeling diffusion. In principle, movements can condition diffusion as a political force at either the field level or within organizations. They can raise (or lower) the infectiousness of innovators and the overall receptivity of organizations to new practices by amassing numbers and resources to contest (or support) field-wide authorities, report (or discredit) success stories in media, enhance (or diminish) the visibility of new practices, or demonstrate (or disprove) the possibility of disruption and change. As movements mobilize effectively at this level, they create political space for alternatives and multiple logics across entire fields, increasing the risk of adoption of novel practices in the aggregate. Alternatively, movements can enhance receptivity by mobilizing ‘locally’ as political forces within individual organizations, making particular organizations or subsets of organizations more or less susceptible to alternatives that are endorsed or adopted by peers, and fueling differential flows of novel practices across organizations.

Furthermore, as movements become more powerful, they can fuel variation in the practices that diffuse within fields. In the recycling case, activist groups on campuses pushed colleges and universities to go beyond minimal approaches to recycling staffed by part-time custodial staff to adopt programs with full-time ecologically committed coordinators (Lounsbury 2001). In the insurance case, increasing the political strength of anti-corporate forces drove some states beyond limited, anti-discrimination forms of price regulation to fuller control measures that gave regulators authority to evaluate and order changes in rate levels (Schneiberg and Bartley 2001). More generally, mobilization, growing movement strength and counter-mobilization can yield substantial editing and refashioning of practices as they travel across organizations, fields or nations and as efforts to fit or reject them to local, receiving contexts unfold (Czarniawska and Joerges 1996; Djelic 1998; Sahlin and Wedlin 2008).

Fortunately, well-developed quantitative tools are available for analyzing movements as political conditions for diffusion, provided measures of movement strength or presence are available. To analyze how movements create possibilities for diffusion by shifting the balance of power in fields, models of adoption could employ interaction effects to examine whether the overall political strength of movements moderates the effects on organizational adoption of prior adoption by peers or endorsement by expert-professionals. An interaction effects strategy could be employed at the organizational level, provided measures of the presence, strength or efficacy of movements within organizations are available. Alternatively, one could use heterogeneous diffusion models (Davis and Greve 1997; Strang and Soule 1998; Briscoe 2015) to see whether increasing movement strength within organizations renders them more susceptible to the influence of peers or professions. As Soule’s (2006) study of university divestment shows, student protests on campuses against investing in South Africa did not directly promote divestment. But by increasing awareness among administrators of university and surrounding communities, demonstrations were a nagging reminder that rendered colleges and universities more vulnerable to legitimacy pressures, making them more likely to divest as their peers jumped on the bandwagon.

Finally, future research could use existing analytical strategies like competing hazards models to begin to analyze quantitatively how growing movement strength might promote the diffusion of increasingly varied, edited or enhanced alternatives (Lounsbury 2001; Schneiberg and Bartley 2001). In this way, too, institutionalists could address how movements as political forces shape not just the overall flow of practices across fields, but also the differential flow of alternatives and practice variants within them.
Opportunity Structures Revised: Institutional Heterogeneity and Overlapping Fields

Alternatively, future work could retain the conventional imagery of institutions and opportunity structures as contexts for movement effects, enhancing or diminishing the effects of numbers, organization and activity on change, but analyze more systematically how opportunity structures are sometimes constituted by overlapping fields, multiple institutions or institutional complexity. This work could exploit a renewed emphasis in institutional and sociological research on heterogeneity, field structure, inter-institutional systems and the role of linking processes across fields in fueling emergence and change (Greenwood et al. 2011; Fligstein and McAdam 2012; Padgett and Powell 2012; Thornton et al. 2012). It would also substantially develop the central insight of this chapter and work by Morrill and others on interstitial emergence that multiple logics, fields or institutions represent platforms for mobilizing collective action and for disturbing, delegitimating or challenging existing arrangements. Specifically, future work could revise imageries of opportunity structure by analyzing (1) configurations of adjacent or overlapping fields, (2) multiple institutions in a setting, or (3) institutional heterogeneity within fields, and how they condition or moderate movement effects on change.

While there is relatively little of this work to date, scholars studying movements have explored the first possibility. In an important early effort, Evans and Kay (2008) analyze how opportunity structures as ‘architectures of field overlap’ enabled environmental activists to exploit linkages at the intersection of fields to overcome political weakness, gain a place at the NAFTA negotiating table, and secure side agreements for transnational standards and enforcement. Environmentalists had been closed out of the US trade policy field, yet they were able to piggyback on labor allies and the concordance between environmental critiques of liberalism and a ‘fair trade’ frame already existing in the US trade policy field, to couple environmental and labor issues within a ‘labor–environmental standards’ frame. Exploiting concordance between field frames, activists linked and adapted environmentalism with frames ascendant in the US trade policy field to recast political discourse there, getting environmental arguments on the trade agenda, while recasting opposition to NAFTA as concerns with environmental degradation and standards in the transnational trade negotiation field. This let challengers defend themselves against the protectionist label in a context where neoliberal frames prevailed.

At key steps in the negotiations, activists were also able to mobilize rule-making linkages, resource dependencies and networks between non-state fields (environmental and community organizations) and legislative fields (Congress), and between legislative and the US and transnational trade policy fields. During deliberations over authorizations, activists used those links to help opponents develop claims in Congress about US plants moving to Mexico to avoid labor and environmental enforcement, which threw fast track authorization into doubt and prompted the US Trade Representative (USTR) to concede a role for environmental organizations on the USTR advisory committees to the NAFTA talks. During substantive and supplemental negotiations, activists used grassroots mobilization to shift public opinion against free trade, generating pressure in Congress to vote NAFTA down, and activating rule-making linkages between Congress, the US trade field and ultimately the transnational trade field to force Mexican officials to negotiate side agreements for international standards and enforcement mechanisms.

Mora (2014)’s study of the emergence of the Hispanic ethnic category also shows how overlapping fields provide activists with opportunities to exploit cross-field or co-constitutive effects in which changes...
or dynamics in one field enable, spark and amplify transformations in another. Struggles over ethnic classification in the state field, and deepening boundary-spanning advisory board connections among the Census Bureau’s data experts, and organizations like National Council of La Raza and Univision in the civil society, media and marketing fields produced a new ethnic category, Hispanic. The rise of this category not only transformed the Bureau’s data gathering and reporting operations, but also generated an important resource that was rapidly appropriated and transposed from the state into civil society and media fields, producing important changes there. In civil society, the new classification prompted the NCLR to redefine its identity as a Hispanic, rather than Chicano, organization, providing it with categories and data for securing foundation grants to support community projects and enabling it to recruit Mexican Americans, Cuban Americans and Puerto Ricans as a pan-ethnic community. In the media field, this category and data enabled Univision to shed its relatively marginalized status as a regional player by reframing itself – and the market – as pan-ethnic, and to work with marketing organizations to develop information on this market, attracting corporate advertisers needed to fund its expansion.

In a similar vein, Gastón (2013) traces how links between fields enabled unions in Southern California to provoke and use crises in the fields of municipal and community organization to reorder the dynamics of contention in the hospitality field. Unions held a weak bargaining position in workplace centered-conflicts with Los Angeles area hotels that were part of global chains and owned by firms that contracted out operations. But they could gain some leverage by allying with local churches, and with community and immigrant rights groups in ‘living wage’ campaigns and protests over local development projects, targeting hotels that were most vulnerable to disruptions in these proximate domains. In ongoing work, Mair, Schneiberg and Wagner (2017) pursue the second possibility for revising opportunity structure arguments, tracing how the presence of multiple institutions in a setting enabled activists in rural India to leverage cross- or inter-institutional effects to transform established sanitary practices of open defecation and public bathing. As is increasingly common in such efforts, the organization spearheading this work relied on local, grassroots mobilization of women in villages. It helped women develop advocacy skills and organize themselves via committees to mobilize resources and commitment for constructing private bathing and flush toilet facilities from and for every household in their village. This effort and the transformation of sanitary practices it sought involved a substantial enhancement of the status, dignity and power of women within villages, potentially eroding some pillars of traditional patriarchy.

Yet the project also re-purposed and leveraged the traditional marriage institution of exchanging brides between villages to put added pressures on households via a ‘no toilet, no bride’ campaign. Participating villages agreed to take or receive brides from other villages that signed up to the program. In effect, activists linked marriage and sanitation and re-purposed marriage institutions to alter institutionalized sanitary practices, a strategy that substantially increased the numbers of new flush toilets constructed and used. This strategy proved particularly effective in villages where women were poor in conventional power resources, suggesting that inter-institutional effect might help challengers overcome political weakness.

Developing these insights quantitatively would be an important step forward, supporting more direct analyses of whether and how the prospects for movement success and the effects of numbers, organizations and protests on outcomes increase (or decrease) in the presence of heterogeneity, multiple institutions or overlapping fields. These analyses could deploy well-developed research
designs, reviewed above, that use multivariate approaches and interaction effects to assess whether opportunity structures as overlapping or multiple institutions, logics or fields moderate the effects of mobilization and movements’ strengths on outcomes. But charting this new terrain requires developing plausible measures of overlap, heterogeneity and the structural potentials they create for cross-field effects, inter-institutional leverage or destabilizing dissonance within fields.

One possibility suggested by prior work (Evans and Kay 2008; Gastón 2013; Mora 2014) involves measuring opportunity structures as field overlap using networks between fields or the dependence of actors or organizations in one field on resources held by organizations in another. Trade flows, ownership ties, foreign investments, supplier relationships, shared personnel or membership in other organizations all seem potentially useful measures of overlaps, cross-field effects and exposure (e.g., Fiss and Zajac 2004; Sanders and Tuschke 2007), as would the extent to which such flows or ties were concentrated or not across multiple fields. These measures could be developed at the organizational level to assess, for example, whether anti-corporate activists might have better success in making numbers and protests count when a target corporation depends heavily on other organizations in one or a small number of proximate fields for resources, status or personnel. Or they could be developed at the field level to assess potential vulnerabilities created by the aggregate set of ties or dependencies of organizations in one field to those in proximate fields and by the concentration of those ties within one or a small number of fields, a strategy that might even adapt measures of structural autonomy (Burt 1992). One could also envision parallel strategies for tapping variability in associational or rule-making linkages between fields, including the number of regulatory bodies or associations with jurisdiction across fields, the extent to which associations draw members from multiple fields, or whether rule-making structures that span fields contain veto points for actors to exert cross field influence. It might even be possible to use semantic or discourse analyses to track the rise or salience of frames in one field that might resonate with those in another or to detect parallels or shared terms, arguments or rhetoric between field frames ascendant in proximate domains in order to detect concordances that contain opportunities to transpose or link frames across domains.

Greenwood and colleagues (2011) provide a framework for doing parallel work on opportunity structures as institutional heterogeneity within fields, that is, for analyzing how multiple logics and field structures that refract those logics might expand opportunities for activists to translate numbers, resources and organization into success. One possible starting point would use conventional prevalence measures of forms or discursive terms to tap the salience or spread of logics within fields (see also Schneiberg and Clemens 2006). In contexts historically characterized by a dominant logic, tracking the rising counts or proportions over time of organizations adopting new forms or practices or of the use of discursive frames that instantiate new logics could provide a crude, but direct measure of increasing heterogeneity. In cases less settled or when multiple logics are in play, researchers could instead track the prevalence or proportions of forms or terms tapping each logic, and then combine them in conventional diversity indexes over time. In either case, the measures produced could be used to assess whether increasing heterogeneity amplifies the effects of movements on outcomes, providing activists with increasingly diverse symbolic resources and material practices for subjecting organizations to new evaluative standards, fostering dissonance, calling the legitimacy of existing institutions into question, or forcing them to negotiate new norms or organizing principles. As Greenwood et al. (2011) suggest, activists’ ability to subject organizations or key institutions to focused normative pressures via insurgent logics could vary considerably with the structure of
fields, including whether different logics are segregated within contained field segments, whether field wide associations prevail and the extent to which decision making authority is dispersed or concentrated within a field. But these in principle could be coded, measured and incorporated into analyses of opportunity structures as institutionally complex.

Less developed are strategies for measuring how multiple institutions in a setting provide leverage for re-purposing or mobilizing inter-institutional effects, highlighting the continued need to build such measures from deep reconstructions of case and context. Mair, Schneiberg and Wagner (2017) provide one example of building a measure of leverage potential in their study of how activists used marriage institutions of inter-village bride exchanges to transform sanitary practices, tracking for each village the number of surrounding villages that embraced new sanitary practices and signed on to the ‘no toilet, no bride’ campaign. As more villages signed on, the circle of options for non-participating villages narrowed, which enhanced the leverage for change traditional marriage practices provided, and accelerated changes in sanitary practices. Deeply rooted in the idiosyncratic characteristics of the case, this measure of opportunity structure as inter-institutional leverage suggests that future work could fruitfully consider the extent to which activists capture or achieve closure around unrelated but pivotal institutions. Such measures could then permit analyses of whether inter-institutional leverage amplifies the effects of numbers, organization or activity on outcomes, or compensates for weakness in those regards.

**Origins of Institutions: History, Sequence and Layering**

Centrally important questions in neo-institutionalism are where do institutions such as fields, practices or paths come from and how are they forged or elaborated over time? As sociologists have emphasized, there is never a clean slate; rather, most new kinds of arenas in social life are constructed from the rubble, or flotsam and jetsam, of previous institutions or paths not taken (Stark 1996; Schneiberg 2007) or from variations produced within extant fields (Lounsbury and Crumley 2007). After all, as Meyer and Rowan (1977: 345) observe in their classic piece, ‘the building blocks for organizations come to be littered around the social landscape; it takes only a little entrepreneurial energy to assemble them into a structure’.

Moreover, new systems are rarely created in one fell swoop, through one wave of diffusion or comprehensive settlements. Rather, paths emerge through multiple waves, over time, via sequences or successive stages of translation, layering, theorization and assembly that elaborate and innovate on previous, partial accomplishments (Streeck and Thelen 2005). And at the core of all field and path creation is some sort of collective mobilization or movement, not just a single burst of organization, but also waves or cycles of mobilization.

The parallels between institutionalist imageries of path creation as waves of layering, on the one hand, and movement research on cycles of mobilization and protest, on the other, suggest that linking these two conceptions can provide new insights for future research on path creation and change, adding an important historical dimension to neo-institutional scholarship. Movement scholars have highlighted the sequencing of social movements and cycles of protest (e.g., Tarrow 1998), tracing, among other things, how contentious politics that involve tactics such as protest are transformed into more conventional forms of political action such as lobbying (Meyer and Tarrow 1998; also Kriesi et al. 1995). Minkoff (1993, 1997) extends the analysis of sequences, adding an organizational dimension, and showing how the proliferation of radical organizations created a favorable context, legitimacy and
political opportunities for subsequent organization by advocacy and practitioner groups, institutionalizing civil rights more deeply in American politics. Such sequences can even involve shifts in scale and loci, including shifts of movements from outside to inside institutions as tempered radicals (Meyerson and Scully 1995) emerge to leverage external pressures or accomplishments to refashion the workings of organizations from within (Zald and Berger 1978; Kellogg 2009; Soule 2009), and vice versa, as when activists working inside institutions or organizations find their efforts blocked, and opt instead to mobilize outside existing organizations (Schneiberg 2002, 2017).

Institutionalists have just begun to think in these terms, but efforts to analyze path and field creation in terms of waves or sequences of mobilization, institutional development and layering, with outcomes of earlier mobilizations producing inputs for later efforts. Lounsbury, Ventresca and Hirsh (2003) took one step in this direction, showing how efforts by ‘outsider’ environmental movements in the 1960s and 1970s to restructure capitalism via not-for-profit, community based recycling centers unintentionally laid foundations for subsequent mobilization by insider groups in the 1980s to create a for-profit recycling industry. Most non-profit recycling centers proved economically non-viable, but they nonetheless trained a generation of Americans in the habits of saving, cleaning and sorting their trash, a critical cultural infrastructure for the creation of markets based on curb-side pick up.

Schneiberg (2007, 2013, 2017) likewise moves in this direction in analyzing efforts by populist and radical anti-corporations to restructure American corporate capitalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For the most part, these movements faced decisive defeats in their efforts to contest corporate capitalism and collapsed. But even though defeated, they nevertheless left behind a variety of organizational, cultural and institutional legacies – bits and pieces of the alternative orders they had pursued, including theories of order, regulatory fragments, local movement chapters, systems of mutual, cooperative and publicly owned enterprise in key industries. These legacies of previous mobilization, in turn, served as resources, platforms and infrastructures for subsequent mobilization in the same or related industries, first, in the Progressive era, and then in the early New Deal. Indeed, successive waves of reformers and anti-corporate forces built or transposed alternatives out from insurance and other sites of mutual organization into dairy and grain, electrical utilities and banking, elaborating a secondary path of industrial order in the US economy.

Nor are these processes confined to economic industries or organizations. As Armstrong (2002, 2005) illustrates, the legacy of initial movements may also include the establishment of new identities, cultural tools such as frames and logics, and ‘creative contexts’ that enable subsequent groups to continue struggles, mobilize and realize new gains in their efforts. The rise of the New Left in the 1960s enabled the creation of new kinds of lesbian/gay organizational identities in San Francisco in the early 1970s. The development of gay identity politics, in turn, proved crucial both in the proliferation of lesbian/gay organizations and in enabling change within mainstream organizations such as the establishment of domestic partner benefits (Creed and Scully 2000; Scully and Creed 2005). And as Alfinito Vieira and Quack (2016) show in their study of indigenous movements in Brazil, sequences of mobilization and institutional development can unfold across levels, supporting changes virtually impossible under initial conditions. Through the late 1960s, indigenous peoples in Brazil were fully disenfranchised under a ‘tutorship regime’ and military dictatorship that denied claims to land, sought to eradicate indigenous identities and drove indigenous communities off traditional domains into reservations. These policies also forced into
exile the anthropologists who might publicize this state of affairs, inadvertently fueling the formation of a transnational network of critical anthropologists, deepening ties and institutional cross-referencing between this network, liberation theology missionaries and international journalists, and a series of key institutional developments. These included the Barbados Declaration, which articulated a critique of indigenism in Latin America, the organization of the Indigenous Missionary Council by progressive Jesuits to help communities advance land claims, and the formation of indigenous support organizations. They also included reports by international journalists, NGOs and even the state’s own bureaucracy that embarrassed the regime, subjected it to growing legitimacy pressures, and prompted defensive reforms, most notably the Indigenous Statute, in an effort to demonstrate the regime’s alignment with indigenous rights. That statute had little immediate relevance for indigenous communities. But along with the support organizations and National Assemblies, it created opportunity structures in Brazil that enabled the indigenous movement to advance and secure measures during democratization and the National Constitutional Assembly that institutionalized indigenous identities and claims to land in the new constitution.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the approach to movements and institutions that we advocate celebrates the heterogeneity of actors, multiple logics and practice variation. A focus on such multiplicity revises the isomorphic imagery of the canonical two-stage diffusion and punctuated equilibrium models. Such a perspective concentrates less on the contagion of unitary practices or a singular rationality, but rather on multiple forms of rationality that inform the decision making of actors in fields (Bourdieu 1984), and provide foundations for ongoing struggle and contestation. This conceptualization of institutionalization and fields as multiple, fragmented and contested is a crucial ontological starting point for a new wave and generation of institutional scholars. And when combined with a renewed attention to movements, it directs analytical attention to how historical legacies of prior social action become embedded in existing fields, providing bases for sequences of mobilization, and the construction of new paths from the elements or ruins of old or forgotten orders. Early work in this direction has proven fruitful and promises to propel institutional analysis for many years to come.

REFERENCES


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