

The Unobtrusive Tactics of Religious Movements

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Many religious and spiritual movements mobilize to establish sacred fields which influence everyday life in multiple social domains. Because these devout groups operate across many institutional fields, scholars of religiously motivated movements are uniquely poised to contribute to scholarship on multi-institutional politics and on how institutional change can be initiated and influenced by external cultural movements. In this paper, I bring attention to how religious movements can mobilize through unobtrusive political tactics which build upon extant social structures in multiple institutional fields, rather than through contentious tactics which are the focus of most movement research. Based on prior scholarship on religious movements and my own research, I identify how religious movements can expand through unobtrusive, nonconfrontational tactics such as “discursive politics,” developing a “state within a state,” “burrowing into” targeted organizations, and “assimilating into” mainstream organizations. These mechanisms identified in religious movement scholarship contribute to underdeveloped areas of scholarship at the intersection of social movement mobilization, organizational change, and field development, and provide a platform upon which future research can build.

Key words: social change; social movements/collective behavior; civic participation; religious change; religious fields.

Religious movements are grounded in transcendent ideological systems which adherents can infuse into their actions in a wide range of social domains (education, politics, economics, culture, etc.). In this respect, religious movements differ from most researched social movements, which tend to focus on a single issue and have more specific targeted audiences such as the state (Armstrong and Bernstein 2008; Gamson 1975). Religious activists also face pervasive, well resourced, secular influences working against them (Taylor 2007). Dominant secular models of liberalism impose legal and normative constraints on religious influence in powerful social institutions such as federal governments, public education, and science. Consequently, modernist and orthodox religious groups have less maneuverability

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in the kinds of claims they can make, while maintaining legitimacy, in these secular contexts compared with other groups (Bush 2008). Religious movements must develop creative strategies to work around secular laws and normative stigmas about their religious ideology and practices to gain support from other stakeholders. Further investigation of how religious movements mobilize is warranted and will reveal important insights on how movements strategize, create new cultural forms, change organizations, and develop new fields.

In this paper, I show how scholarship on religious movements reveals a host of unobtrusive, noncontentious tactics often overlooked by the contentious politics literature on social movements and field development. First, based on others' previous research, I identify pathways through which religiously based movements have mobilized by creating new cultural fields which build upon and around extant institutional structures, while largely avoiding direct confrontation and conflict.¹ Mary Katzenstein's (1999) investigation of feminist Catholic mobilization highlights how this movement initiated change within the Catholic Church by creating new, egalitarian, Catholic ideologies both within and outside of the formal Catholic institution. Nancy Davis's and Robert Robinson's (2012) scholarship reveals how orthodox religious movements can build around secular states by creating an alternative "state within a state." Orthodox movements also may "burrow into" extant organizations by winning official leadership positions through elections and popular support.

Second, based on my ongoing research of a movement of contemplative meditators, I show how modernist religious movements can construct new sacred fields in multi-institutional environments by "assimilating" and blending into powerful organizations in new institutional fields.² I illustrate how this movement is expanding gradually and oftentimes under the radar into new secular fields by using long-term conversion strategies and by teaching new adopters meditation practices cloaked in institution-specific hybrid forms of contemplative culture.

BEYOND CONTENTIOUS POLITICS

Most research on social movements has focused on groups which try to effect political change in the state through contentious tactics (Gamson 1975; Giugni 1998; McAdam 1982; McAdam et al. 2001). As a result, until the past decade,

¹For the purposes of this paper, I speak of fields as synonymous with strategic action fields (SAFs), as described by Fligstein and McAdam (2012). These authors define SAFs as well defined, constructed, mesolevel social orders which individual and collective actors are aware of and attuned to. These actors act on the basis of shared understandings about the purposes and rules of the field and hold common conceptions of its relationship to other fields (5, 9).

²This paper builds from my dissertation research (Kucinskas 2014). The modernist contemplative movement I examine is composed of meditators who practice either Buddhist meditation or forms of meditation that derive from it and adhere to some Buddhist ideology, philosophy, and values as part of their lifestyle.

research on social movements largely failed to identify the various ways movements target cultural change in multiple fields as well as political reform of the state (Armstrong and Bernstein 2008; Binder 2002; Van Dyke et al. 2004). There have also been few studies that investigate how movements expand through non-oppositional, consensus-building tactics (Klandermans 1988; McCarthy and Wolfson 1992; Pellow 1999). Part of this oversight is due to how some movement scholars, such as Alberto Melucci (1996) and Sidney Tarrow (1994), conceptualize movements as having contentious elements by definition.

The shift to studying movements through a multi-institutional politics lens that assesses how power is concentrated in various institutional domains in society (Armstrong and Bernstein 2008; Van Dyke et al. 2004) necessarily requires consideration of a wider range of movements and the gamut of contentious and collaborative tactics that they pursue. Accordingly, recent definitions of social movements extend beyond cases engaged primarily in contentious tactics to include cases of collective mobilization that challenge dominant powers, authorities, or culture.³ With this conceptual shift, there is more leeway in movement research to examine a wider range of cases, and for studying how religious movements in particular strive for broader social change by using unobtrusive, consensus-based tactics.⁴

While there was some attention to consensus-based movements in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Katzenstein 1990; Klandermans 1988; McCarthy and Wolfson 1992), and much research has emerged from this tradition on social skill and framing (Benford and Snow 2000; Fligstein 2001), little research examines other consensus-based strategies. I began doing research on religious movements because they can inform us of the diverse ways dominant power structures can be challenged that do not include direct aggression and confrontation.⁵

SHIFTING FIELD THEORIES

Scholarship on organizational change and field construction also has much to gain from the vibrant body of research on religious fields in the sociology of religion. The largest body of scholarship on religious fields, which is based on neoinstitutional theory, investigates how religious fields' dominant organizational forms, tasks, and routine actions diffuse and are normatively and coercively regulated (Edgell 2012). However, in recent years, institutional and field theorists have turned their attention away from neoinstitutional diffusion studies which suggest that actors unconsciously diffuse culture. Scholars are now trying to better explain

³For example, Goodwin and Jasper (2003:3) define movements as: "a collective, organized, sustained and non-institutional challenge to authorities, power holders, or cultural beliefs and practices."

⁴For more on unobtrusive tactics, see Mary Katzenstein's (1990) article.

⁵See also Heidi Swarts's (2007) *Organizing Urban America: Secular and Faith-Based Progressive Movements*. Swarts found a primary distinction between the secular and faith-based progressive movements she examined was that later focused on building stable coalitions that would last over time, while the former used more confrontational tactics.

how actors exercise agency under the constraints of social structure when facilitating organizational change and new field construction. There has been a rapid growth in research on institutional entrepreneurship and institutional work, which suggests that certain socially skilled actors initiate change and innovation within organizations and fields (Battilana et al. 2009; Lawrence et al. 2009). Building from this tradition of institutional scholarship and upon research on contentious movements, Fligstein and McAdam's recent (2012) theory of strategic action fields suggests actors establish and change fields through social skill and movement tactics to gain advantages over others in their field.

These bodies of work are based primarily on political and economic case studies that carry intrinsic limitations. For example, Fligstein and McAdam (2012) rely heavily on the contentious politics and social movement literature which, as discussed above, has systematically neglected consensus-based tactics. The starting point of their theory argues that fields comprised incumbents and challengers, which is based on Gamson's (1975) distinction based on political movements. Thus, their theory is rooted in a zero-sum conceptualization of conflict, which neglects how movements can use consensus-based strategies which seek to develop "stakeholders" with aligned or overlapping interests from among various different, and at times competing, constituencies (Pellow 1999). In addition, the organization and management literature on institutional entrepreneurship fails to account sufficiently for the multifield environments companies are embedded in (Battilana et al. 2009). Studies of how religious fields are formed, expand, and change, can be used to test and refine Fligstein and McAdam's (2012) theory of field emergence, as well as broaden research on institutional entrepreneurship with a greater sensitivity to the influence of these entrepreneurs' strategic use of their multi-institutional environments.

BUILDING FROM THE INSIGHTS OF UNOBTRUSIVE, MULTI-INSTITUTIONAL RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT MOBILIZATION

Because religious movements can promote change in diverse fields in varied unobtrusive ways which develop new cultures and structures rather than engaging in contestation with dominant power holders, studying them will contribute to undeveloped areas of scholarship at the intersections of social movements and organizational change. Despite how social movement and organizations scholarship both seek to better understand the emergence and effects of collective action, the two trajectories of research were built upon different theoretical traditions, and consequently developed independently of each other for most of the twentieth century.⁶ Although these two literatures have converged to a

⁶For a historical account of the relationship between social movement theory and organizational studies, see Weber and King (2014).

considerable extent over the past two decades, many gaps remain between them. Elisabeth Clemens, for example, describes how within social movement theory, “formal organizations have been either denounced as the enemy of significant protest . . . or ‘black-boxed as a resource for activists’ (Clemens 2005:359). Social movement research can be improved by greater attentiveness to how movements select targets from among the diverse groups within organizations and fields. Future research on movements and organizational change should pay more attention to the specific layers of organizational culture movements target and no longer neglect the capacity for change in local interactional culture within organizations (Binder 2007).

Research on religious movements is poised to fill gaps between the movement and organizational change literature by identifying the many ways religious groups use unobtrusive, consensus-based tactics to navigate complex relationships with targeted organizations in multiple institutional fields to produce cultural change. In what follows, I review examples of religious movement scholarship which reveal various unobtrusive strategies movements can use to mobilize within and across multiple institutional fields, instead of engaging in direct confrontation and conflict.

Discursive Politics

In *Faithful and Fearless: Moving Feminist Protest inside the Church and Military* (1999), Mary Katzenstein investigates how feminist Catholics mobilize to construct a new knowledge community which promotes greater inclusivity of people of all genders, races, and sexual orientations in Catholicism. She finds that in the face of intransigent church leadership under Pope John Paul II, these feminist women focused on changing Catholic ideas, rather than targeting policy change in the Vatican. The Catholic feminists’ primary tactic was to engage in *discursive politics*, which Katzenstein defines as a politics of reflection and reformulation (1999:107). The alternative Catholic discourses these feminists created were viewed as a first step in a broader restructuring of the Church and greater society. They sought to first create a new knowledge community, which they hoped would then work toward more egalitarian structural changes.

Catholic feminists made new discursive free spaces in conferences, workshops, liturgy groups, women’s renewal organizations, academia, churches, and people’s homes to convene, reflect on, and reform Catholic culture. They did this by creating and expressing new, more equal, inclusive forms of Catholic culture through a diverse range of tactics which included public speaking, dialogue in small gatherings, composing and recording songs, making cards, printing t-shirts, directing plays, writing letters and pamphlets, news releases, and publishing books.

Creating a “State within a State”

In their 2012 book, *Claiming Society for God: Religious Movements and Social Welfare in Egypt, Israel, Italy, and the United States*, Nancy Davis and Robert V. Robinson compare the development of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the

Jewish Shas movement in Israel, the Catholic *Comunione e Liberazione* in Italy, and the Evangelical Protestant Salvation Army in the United States. These authors find that the four orthodox movements use similar noncontentious tactics to infiltrate multiple secular fields. One way orthodox movements expanded their influence was by *bypassing the official state* to create an alternative “*state within a state*” or “*parallel society*” infused with their religious ideology. These movements worked around the conventional political channels, which they were excluded or marginalized from because of their religious ideology, to build their own institutions. In their institutions, the religious orthodox could adhere to their religious doctrines without having to compromise with secular stakeholders in state-run organizations. These efficacious alternative institutions implicitly undermined the legitimacy and credibility of the state because they functioned more efficiently than government organizations. These religious movement organizations also allowed potential supporters to imagine what society might be like if their movement ideology was fully implemented.

Davis and Robinson (2012:25–26) found that the religiously orthodox movements they studied tended to build a “state within a state” first by establishing a house of worship in a new targeted community. Then, they proceeded to build schools and social service organizations, such as medical clinics and clubs, in association with their central religious organization. From there they expanded out, building other religiously inspired organizations in business and other fields.

“Burrowing into” *Secular Institutions*

The orthodox movements Davis and Robinson (2012) investigated also “burrowed into” existing institutions to expand their influence. With this tactic, orthodox movement members first gained popularity among insiders of organizations in secular fields. Then these orthodox activists campaigned in elections to win formal leadership positions in targeted organizations. The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, for example, won leadership positions in the professional associations of lawyers, engineers, journalists, professors, and other professions in Egypt in the 1980s and early 1990s. They won control of student unions throughout Egypt in the 1990s as well. In Italy, *Comunione e Liberazione* also won elections, wresting control of Italian student councils from non-Catholic groups.

These orthodox movements then used the positions of power they won as platforms from which to further expand their power by providing many services to constituents. The Brotherhood provided professionals with training, emergency insurance, no interest loans for marriages or entrepreneurship, and subsidized healthcare (Davis and Robinson 2012:45). *Comunione e Liberazione*’s student leaders expanded their influence to gain control of student dining halls and housing. In addition, *Comunione e Liberazione* provided services for students such as discounts at businesses affiliated with the movement, favorable terms at the movement’s associated banks, reduced photocopying rates, and a used-book purchasing service for students.

Although these orthodox movements burrowed into secular organizations, they maintained their rigid orthodox religious ideology, which their services were often tied directly to. For example, the Muslim Brotherhood has required that female students using their transportation services to universities wear a hijab. The Brotherhood has also provided Islamic clothing to poor students who could not otherwise afford to buy their own garments.

Assimilating New Subcultures into Mainstream Institutions to Transform Them from Within

In my research, I identify how a Buddhist-inspired meditation movement diffuses into popular Western culture through another distinguishable kind of mobilization process. This movement tries to *assimilate and blend* into dominant institutions, beginning in esteemed organizations in each new field. Although there have been elite and professional groups trying to bring meditation and Eastern spiritual practices to the public and to specific professional audiences for over a century (Lopez 1998), the contemplative movement is the first to diffuse and legitimize meditation in science, higher education, K-12 education, and healthcare through their strategic, socially skilled assimilation processes. More recently, these meditators have diffused their practices into business, the military and professional sports as well.

In contrast to the orthodox movements which created alternative social structures or “burrowed” into secular organizations by getting elected into leadership positions without compromising their religious ideologies, contemplatives instead used insider access and knowledge to translate and adapt Buddhist culture so that it blended into institutional cultures in targeted organizations. Then they seamlessly diffused their secularized contemplative culture within and across secular institutional fields. Below, I discuss various tactics the contemplatives used to assimilate into and add onto their targeted organizations and fields, with the hope of eventually transforming institutional culture in these social arenas.

Using a long-term conversion strategy with gradual exposure to religious culture. One way religious movements can assimilate into secular spaces is by using unobtrusive, socially skilled, long-term conversion strategies. Contemplatives viewed the process of recruitment and conversion as a long-term strategy in which new adopters’ commitment to contemplative practice and culture would naturally increase over time with meditation practice. In accordance with Buddhist modernism and the Buddhist tenet of teaching others through “skillful means” or “meeting people where they are,” contemplatives gradually exposed new audiences to contemplative culture through adapted, delimited, and often secularized forms of meditation practice.⁷ Meditators had a faith that the proof is in the pudding, and that with regular meditation practice, new adopters would enjoy an improved quality of

⁷Davis and Robinson (2012) found that the orthodox movements they examined did not adapt their religious ideology to resonate with new adopters, but they did gradually expose new members to the depth of the religion in the organization. Organizations like the Egyptian

life and investigate the practices' underlying religious ideologies more deeply; they at no point required faith in gods or an exclusive religious commitment from their practitioners. Contemplatives discussed how they were not concerned about teaching only selected forms of meditation practice or using translated, transformed renditions of Buddhist ideology to new adopters, because they thought exposure to meditation practice operated like a planting a seed, which gradually would take root.⁸ The seed may not germinate and grow immediately, but could be activated and nurtured to grow at some point in the future.⁹

Embedding practice-based hybrid subcultures. Religious movements can also unobtrusively embed themselves in secular fields by creating hybrid subcultures adapted for their particular audiences. Contemplatives created new hybrid subcultures which adapted and transformed Buddhist meditation based on their knowledge of each targeted organization or institutional field. Contemplatives "played the game" by describing their meditation programs as secular solutions to institution-specific problems to get their programs in the door without opposition.¹⁰ They removed religious language which they thought would not resonate with target audiences. As they developed their programs, contemplative leaders continued to adapt meditation instruction to organizations' vernacular languages and structures gradually through trial and error based on feedback from new adopters.

Founders of meditation programs sought to unobtrusively assimilate their institution-specific forms of contemplative culture into new social arenas. One director of human resources told a contemplative business coach working with leaders in her organization the following, "Now I see what you're doing. I understand what it is. What you're doing is you've created a subculture and you're infiltrating the rest of the culture." The business coach responded, "That is exactly my strategy. . . . I caution these people, we NEVER come into conflict with the dominant culture, because as soon as we come into conflict with it, this group's dead, and the thing's squashed. This is all under the radar. And it worked."

Muslim Brotherhood gradually imposed expectations of religious adherence on members, requiring utmost commitment from leaders central to the organization.

⁸Buddhist metaphors of planting and nurturing positive seeds of goodness, or negative seeds or tendencies which obscure true underlying reality, date back at least to Tsongkhapa in the fourteenth century (Berzin 2012). Metaphors of seeds are also used in Christianity (see Matt. 13:31; Luke 13:19). Future research should more systematically examine the similarities and differences between the conversion literature in the sociology of religion and the recruitment literature on movements.

⁹For example, one educator likened this process to her own experience with mindful meditation. She first attended a mindfulness meditation retreat in 2000. She did not fully commit to the practice and do it regularly until she realized it would be useful to her students four years later. Then she attended a second mindfulness-based meditation course and began teaching it to her stressed graduate students.

¹⁰Similarly, Evelyn Bush (2008) found that in UN negotiations, Islamic countries adapted their argumentation style so that it aligned with international diplomatic speech norms governed by a discourse of "rationalizing progress."

Distinguished Professor at the University of Wisconsin, Richard Davidson, also described how, “We . . . try in every possible way we can to cultivate an environment where we can actually practice science and practice Dharma in a way which is seamless.” He went on to give an example of how humility was an important value in Buddhism which also would lead to more high quality scientific work: “I think humility—and one of the ways we practice humility is by being really honest about what we don’t know, which far exceeds what we do know—and non-attachment to outcome and the data . . . is one example.” Thus, contemplatives found points of convergence between the two cultures they drew from, and used frame extension, amplification, and bridging (Snow et al. 1986) to emphasize these points to new adopters.

Contemplatives’ primary shared commitment was to diffusing meditation practice rather than to a shared collective identity, a specific goal, or a particular clearly defined ideology.¹¹ An explicit focus on practice rather than ideology contributed to contemplatives’ successful recruitment of new practitioners and the diffusion of practices in several ways. First, many contemplatives taught primarily by modeling practices in their actions or through embodied exercises taught to others, rather than by extolling Buddhism. By doing so, they did not appear to be not proselytizing their personal beliefs and practices. Second, many leaders deliberately did not reveal to new practitioners the many ways meditation practice is related to Buddhist ideology. Third, because contemplatives taught practice-based “tools” for personal development, rather than a domain-specific ideology which might seem irrelevant out of context or a religious ideology which would be viewed as inappropriate in secular contexts, meditation could diffuse easily. Contemplative tools were seen as applicable to any and every social experience. This quality facilitated the diffusion of contemplative practice into various diverse new social spaces.

The transformative potential of religiously based practices. Religiously based meditation practices are deeply tied to religious ideology (Pagis 2010), even though it does not appear so to new practitioners at first. Contemplative practice transforms meditators’ worldviews systematically over time to be aligned with Buddhist values and perspectives (Kucinskis 2014). Meditation teaches practitioners to self-regulate their minds and bodies in hopes of liberating themselves and others from suffering, which are central tenets of Buddhism.

Contemplatives described meditation as a tool for deepening one’s experiences of the world and clarifying the way they perceive it. One contemplative leader described how, “The point of mindfulness, however, is to ultimately get an insight. You’re not just tryin’ to be able to make sure that you don’t spill your coffee.” He went on to say:

¹¹Nearly every contemplative I spoke with insisted on the importance of maintaining a regular personal meditation practice for themselves and their recruits and of diffusing practice to others in order to alleviate their suffering.

it's like if a microscope is the instrument you use to observe the world as a scientist. Your mindfulness is the instrument you use to observe your life. Your inner life. Your outer life. All of life. And, if the instrument is shaky or blurred, you're not gonna see so well. The point is not the instrument. The point is what you see. And, then ultimately, based on that, how you learn to be.

However, contemplative perspectives did not always align with their targeted institutions' aims as closely as most purported. For example, one contemplative educator who brings meditation into public and private K-12 schools told me how even though contemplative educators emphasize convergences between contemplative culture and targeted institutional purposes and needs, there are differences between the two: "There's what I want them to get out of it, and then there's . . . what do the schools want them to get out of it," he said, "which have a lot of crossover, but are not exactly the same." He went on to disclose:

There's this much deeper aspect, which I think the schools don't think about as much, or it isn't the reason they're excited about it. But I think some teachers are. The deepest level is around liberation. . . . Sometimes I think teachers just want the kids to be calm and be regulated more so they can pass tests, and that's not my intention. My intention is to give them this deep sense of inner awareness and stillness, but from that to be able to empower them to be able to react in a conscious way to things that are happening in this system that aren't actually good.

Contemplative programs aim to change local organizational culture from within institutions. They teach new adopters to work from a grounded place of contemplative values and habits which they perceive as tools for self-liberation cultivated through meditation practice. These contemplatives think meditation practices will increase practitioners' awareness of their workplaces' institutional logics, norms, and motives, liberating individuals from these constraints. Contemplative meditation programs also teach new adopters how to apply contemplative values and habits in their work instead. Contemplative leaders believe this will unleash individuals' true human potential and help establish a more contemplative, democratic, humanistic society grounded in intra- and interpersonal awareness, kindness, and compassion.

DISCUSSION

Religious movements are grounded in moral cosmologies that identify what is sacred and what the appropriate locus of moral authority is. Because these ideological systems are intended to transcend and inform all areas of life, they can be used to motivate movements with broad agendas that seek to infuse all domains of life with that which they hold sacred. As I show in this paper, such movements can expand using a variety of tactics which avoid direct confrontation and conflict with power holders and establish sacred fields gradually over long periods of time. Such unobtrusive consensus-based approaches to initiate large-scale cultural changes have been neglected by movement and field scholarship to date.

The movements discussed above overcame seeming liabilities such as multi-pronged, ambitious agendas and stigmatized ideologies or practices which challenged dominant power structures. Their repertoire of noncontentious tactics quietly circumvents and undermines dominant systems of power that exclude or marginalize their movements' beliefs and/or practices through legal statutes, norms, and at times coercive power. These movements find niches where they can organize and incubate their power, which can be outside of dominant organizations, contiguous to them, or in spaces where movement leaders have autonomy within targeted organizations. From these platforms, the different kinds of religious movements described above gradually recruit new adopters by organizing in the margins and trying to incorporate new religious meanings, ideology, and practices into various parts of adherents' lives. Oftentimes, these religious movements' initiatives are not advertised broadly to targeted audiences or to the larger public until after they have already built up considerable followings. Or when they do connect with broader audiences, their message may have been secularized, filtered, and/or adapted for both particular local and broader audiences so that they will not put off secular or less religiously inclined potential new converts.

Because religious movements can operate differently from many class-based or political justice movements studied by past movement researchers, further investigation of religious movements, which are more likely to have broad multi-pronged agendas, and other potential liabilities such as stigmatized ideological systems or practices, can inform broader movement and strategic action field research by identifying specific strategies for mobilization that have hitherto been overlooked by other scholars. For example, after identifying an alternative non-contentious battery of tactics which their orthodox movements utilize such as building a "state within a state," [Davis and Robinson \(2012\)](#) show how these tactics have also been used by other secular movements such as the Black Panthers, the American feminist movement, and peace and conflict resolution movements in South Africa, Northern Ireland, Israel, and Palestine. In a similar vein, the tactics used by the contemplative meditators have also been effectively implemented by secular movements. For example, the recycling movement has been effective at diffusing recycling programs and practices into colleges and universities ([Lounsbury 2001](#)). In the environmental movement against climate change, organizers have worked to involve coalitions of professionals in reputable organizations (e.g., The American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment and the Business for Innovative Climate and Energy Policy coalition), who mobilize across and through their workplace organizations to promote awareness of climate change and initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Future research should compare these secular and religious cases more closely in order to test and refine theories of mobilization and field development that are rooted in conflict-based theories of political and economic change. Scholars of social change processes also have much to gain by better attending to how hybrid institutions and programs situated in multiple fields enable movements to extend their reach. Because religious fields often overlap multiple other secular fields, future

research which shifts the current neoinstitutionalist focus on cultural diffusion within religious fields to studies examining how religious fields can be created and expanded across multiple institutional fields will contribute much to these areas of scholarship. I suspect increased attention to how culture is diffused simultaneously to many fields will reveal how cultural diversity is created through numerous processes of creative action. Greater sensitivity to cultural innovation, complexity, and diversity will contribute to scholarship on social movements and cultural change.

While I focus my research on how religious movements can use consensus-based tactics to establish new fields to complement contemporary studies of contentious mobilization processes, religious movements can also draw upon their transcendent ideologies to use particular contentious tactics which are unfamiliar to scholars of secular movements. For example, Mark Juergensmeyer (2003) shows how militant religious movements draw upon religious narratives of cosmic, divine warfare to motivate and justify militants' acts of performative violence. Future research on religious movements should continue to identify ways militants use religious culture to mobilize violence against their opponents, as well as to compare how religious movements with similar ideologies draw from them in different ways to justify consensus-based or contentious tactics. Better understandings of these processes are not only important to the study of the sociology of religion, but intrinsic to central questions in sociology. By better identifying the conditions under which ideology is used to motivate peaceful or violent activity, how moral systems are mobilized to influence other social systems, how agentic potential under structural constraints is activated, and how powerful social systems are changed through collective action, we contribute not only to broad sociological knowledge, but to intrinsic questions of what it means to be a moral, social being embedded in complex, constraining, environments.

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