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Social Change, Social Theory, and the Convergence of Movements and Organizations

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The essays in this volume have brought together two fields of inquiry, the study of social movements and the study of organizations, that have shown substantial convergence in core concepts and modes of analysis (McAdam and Scott, Chap. 1; Campbell, Chap. 2). Social movements are often represented by formal organizations, and organizations respond to social movements and have movement-like processes within themselves. Thus, scholars from both areas of study are finding it useful to borrow or bridge across the boundaries. This is not an entirely new development; indeed, it has a long, if fitful, history. We will not review that history here, although Elisabeth Clemens, in the next chapter, helps us to understand why that history has been so fitful. Instead, we want to give a partial answer to the question, Why now? Why is this bridging even more relevant today than it has been in the past? What events and processes “out there” almost force us to bridge and blend these two areas?

In this era of rapid social change, organizations increasingly resemble episodic movements rather than ongoing bounded actors, and organizations and movements are changing their strategies and routines in response to similar social and technological changes. Moreover, one of the most visible social movements of our time, aimed at reining in “globalization from above,” is explicitly oriented toward contemporary economic and organizational arrangements. We are not attempting a full history of the fields of study, nor of the development and intersection of movements and

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organizations in the last several decades: thus our answer to the “why now” question is partial. The main body of this chapter focuses upon two cases, the ouster of Erap Estrada as president of the Philippines and antiglobalization protests in Washington, which we use to illustrate some of the trends toward convergence in movements and organizations.

Even though there is a history of mutual borrowing between organization studies and the study of social movements, the pace has quickened in recent years. Many years ago Zald and Berger (1978) noted the analogy between political change processes in organizations and social movements in society. They argued that the methods of challengers at the societal level – insurgencies, coups d’état, and even mass movements – had their parallels within large organizations. Few took up their argument. More recently a handful of researchers from each school has begun to draw on work from the other, using social movement theory to make sense of shareholder activism (Davis and Thompson 1994) and the organization of the biotechnology industry (Koput, Powell, and Smith-Doerr 1997), or using ecological concepts of organizations to explain the growth of feminist social movement organizations (Minkoff 1997b) or concepts from neoinstitutionalism to explain the spread of organizational repertoires among women’s political organizations (Clemens 1993). In each case the concepts, mechanisms, and hypotheses from one theoretical tradition illuminated processes studied in the other.

The impetus for greater crossover comes from events in the world as well as from academic concerns. As corporations have become increasingly multinational and encompassing, they have taken on the character of polities whose “citizens” may engage in collective action to challenge policies with which they disagree (Zald and Berger 1978). For instance, Creed and Scully (1998) looked at social movements *within* and *across* organizations in their study of the spread of the policy of providing domestic partner benefits for gay and lesbian employees. Within organizations, activists had the difficult task of locating and organizing the support of employees that may have preferred anonymity. Across organizations, activists formed networks with their counterparts to share tactics and provide support, thus providing a mechanism for the diffusion of policies through interorganizational networks from below. Analogous processes characterize the spread of movement tactics *across nations*, where networks of labor, consumer, and human rights advocates seek to shape the agendas of corporations and states as the rules of the new global economy are worked out (Evans 2000). On a single day in February 2003, more than six million

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protesters around the world marched in dozens of cities on six continents behind the slogan “the world says no to war” in response to the anticipated U.S. invasion of Iraq, demonstrating the emergence of a vast and rapidly self-organized movement out of thin air. And *within* nations, protest movements have arisen to respond to IMF-induced policies in South Korea, U.S.-backed privatization in Puerto Rico, cross-border hostile takeovers in Germany, and the process of globalization itself in Seattle at the meetings of the World Trade Organization in 1999. In a globalizing economy, organizations are the context for, the actors in, and the objects of social movements.

We argue that processes of economic globalization, changing forms of production, the spread of information and communication technologies, and changing poles of power from states to corporations generate pressures for convergence in the processes of movements and organizations. Yet the underlying mechanisms of collective action remain the same for both organizations and movements (see Campbell, this volume). We illustrate some recent changes with brief discussions of the “popular” ouster of Erap Estrada in the Philippines and the organization of the antiglobalization protests after Seattle. We then derive some implications from these cases and suggest themes appropriate for future research.

Social Change and Convergence in Processes of Collective Action

Economic globalization – the increasing cross-border flow of capital, goods, and labor – is the master trend currently generating many of the pressures for change in movements and organizations. During the 1990s, world trade finally re-attained the levels reached prior to the first World War (about \$25 billion per day in 1997), while financial flows achieved astounding levels, with foreign exchange trading at roughly \$1.5 trillion per day (Gilpin 2000: 22). Portfolio investment in low-income “emerging” markets via rich-nation institutional investors increased from nearly zero in the early 1980s to \$130 billion in 1996, creating an implicit competition among states to attract financial investors in local companies. At the same time, foreign direct investment by multinationals grew even more dramatically. A relative handful of global corporations controls a major part of the world’s economic assets and directly or indirectly employs a substantial fraction of the global labor force. Mobile capital and global companies have become increasingly powerful instruments of economic development at the presumed expense of nation-states.

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The countless tomes written about economic globalization hardly have achieved consensus about its implications. Some see a triumph of market-based, American-style capitalist democracy around the world (e.g., Friedman 1999), while others see predictable signs of a hegemonic crisis that will end “more or less catastrophically” for the current great powers (Arrighi and Silver 1999: 259). Skeptics see the current round of economic globalization as simply an extension of prior trends, while true believers argue that “the current world economy has no parallels in earlier times. In the new global electronic economy, fund managers, banks, corporations, as well as millions of individual investors, can transfer vast amounts of capital from one side of the world to another at the click of a mouse. As they do so, they can destabilize what might have seemed rock-solid economies – as happened in the events in Asia” (Giddens 2000: 27). What is at stake? Just as corporations compete for consumers and investors, states compete to provide the labor and investment opportunities sought by multinational investors and firms. Both in their structures and their strategies, corporations and states come to be more similar.

One outcome of this process is that sovereign boundaries begin to lose significance. James C. Scott (1997) described the ideology of “high modernism” in which clearly demarcated and centrally controlled nation-states could improve the human condition of their inhabitants with rational planning. Such schemes made the most sense when bounded economic units, such as households and firms, were contained within bounded nation-states. But in a world of transnational businesses, states do not contain firms, and their power to regulate them is limited in certain important respects. When business is mobile, states become vendors of laws and regulations, competing with other states to attract corporate buyers. Firms in turn are able to fine-tune their jurisdictions to find the right combination of corporate, securities, tax, and labor laws. To take a baroque example, in 2001 the Tommy Hilfiger Corporation, purveyor of “classic American clothing,” had its corporate headquarters in Hong Kong, was legally incorporated in the British Virgin Islands, listed its shares on the New York Stock Exchange, held its annual meeting in Barbados, and contracted to have its products manufactured primarily in Mexico and Asia. Meaningful boundaries – for both firms and states – become increasingly ambiguous under these circumstances. As boundaries around nations and organizations become more permeable and old legal and regulatory structures break down, both firms and citizens are moved to mobilize.

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Within the general process of economic globalization, three broad trends influence what organizations and movements do (their “productions”), how they do it (how collective action is accomplished), and to whom they do it (their targets). The first is the rise of postindustrial production and the increasing importance of service and knowledge work. Within the United States, the proportion of jobs in the service sector has long since eclipsed employment in manufacturing and agriculture. A hallmark of the service sector is that what is produced is often perceptual, emotional, symbolic, or cultural – in the extreme case, the production of spectacle. Harvey (1990) and Jameson (1991) argued for the intrinsic link between the postmodernist esthetic of ephemerality and spectacle and changes in underlying processes of production and accumulation. For businesses, “branding” and “impression management” become central managerial tasks for conveying desirable images to consumers and investors. For social movements, similarly, it is the production of impressions and emotions that are foregrounded.

The production of spectacles, as well as more conventional production, follow different patterns due to the widespread use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). The prospects for coordinated action are greatly enhanced by cell phones, the Internet, and other enabling technologies. Organized action can be more expansive, flexible, and diffuse, from how businesses organize their supply chain to the means of bringing about street protests. Organization theorists might describe this in terms of the changing transaction costs of collective action (e.g., Williamson 1994). Among businesses this shift has prompted a more industrially focused approach to the boundaries of firms, or “deverticalization” in the ungainly phrase of the corporate world, along with a network or “coalitional” approach to production (Piore and Sabel 1984; see Powell, Koput, and Smith-Doerr 1996). Thus, just as movement “productions” are often brought about by temporary coalitions of activist organizations, product lines are often produced by temporary networks of firms. This is not to say that organizations are disappearing due to advances in ICTs (cf. Brown and Duguid 2000), but that how they are collectively organized has shifted in a direction that highlights their analogy with social movements (Davis and McAdam 2000).

Finally, just as the move toward the nation-state system generated waves of contention (Tilly 1993), the growth of a global economic system has shifted the poles of power – and thus to some extent the objects of contention – from nation-states to transnational corporations and

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multilateral agencies and associations. We have already described how the mobility of capital compels states to act as “vendors” of laws – states do not simply regulate the entities that happen to be housed within them, but compete with other states to attract jurisdictional residents, thus subjecting themselves to the whim of the corporate and capital markets. But just as states come to look more like businesses, so do organizations come to look more like states. Building on the early insights of Selznick (1969), Edelman and colleagues (1999) described how employees came to be “citizens” of the corporate polity where they worked, with attendant rights and legalistic grievance procedures. Laws often end up creating analogs of state agencies within firms, as Dobbin et al. (1993) found in the wake of equal employment opportunity legislation. Following Zald and Berger (1978), Scully and Creed (1999) found social movements among disenfranchised gay and lesbian employees seeking equal treatment with respect to the benefits they and their families received. Moreover, consumers as well as employees treat corporations as analogous to states, and thus as appropriate objects of contention: a McDonald’s in France is more likely to be the site of protests than an American embassy (see Klein 1999 on the “no-brand movement”). Through their global power and visibility, transnational corporations become salient sites of protest from within and without.

Yet while we have highlighted how changes in the global economy, information and communication technologies, and the organization of production alter the fields of action of organizations and movements, we also must emphasize what remains the same. Both movements and organizations are, at bottom, forms of organized action and as such are susceptible to similar tools of analysis (see the chapters by Campbell and by McAdam and Scott). Organizers must recruit and retain participants and provide a common orientation through training or other means, whether the form of collective action is explicitly temporary or long-term (Scott 2003). For example, both telephone call centers and high-risk actions such as Freedom Summer recruit through networks among current and prospective participants (Fernandez et al. 2000; McAdam 1986). By the same token, practices diffuse among activist organizations and firms through networks. Processes of organizational change are analogous across movements and organizations. At a fundamental level, the project of mobilizing and sustaining collective action remains the same across contexts and over time (see Campbell, this volume).

We next turn to two illustrative examples of how the study of movements and organizations might benefit from greater crossover.

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The Eighteenth Brumaire of Joseph Estrada?

Karl Marx famously opened *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* with the quip “Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.” The street protests that ultimately led to the ouster of Philippine President Joseph “Erap” Estrada in January 2001 followed the tracks laid down by similar events fifteen years before, when the autocratic Ferdinand Marcos was ousted by the “people power” movement. After seven years of democratic rule, Marcos had declared martial law in 1972 and continued to hold power for fourteen more years in the face of increasingly vocal domestic and foreign opposition. The assassination of Marcos’s exiled rival Benigno Aquino upon his return to the Philippines in August 1983 catalyzed opposition among business and religious leaders, and in February 1986 mass street demonstrations, coupled with the defection of his top military leaders, drove Marcos into exile in Hawaii. The Manila demonstrations, centered on Epifania de los Santos Avenue (EDSA), were both nonviolent and dramatic – at one point, praying nuns faced down tanks in the street. The bloodless ouster of Marcos and the subsequent restoration of democracy came to be known as the “yellow revolution” (see McAdam et al. 2001: 107 ff. for a brief description).

If Ferdinand Marcos’s ouster was tragedy, then Joseph Estrada’s forced resignation when confronted by People Power II (as it was labeled) was farce. “Erap” Estrada, a popular actor, was elected by a landslide in May 1998 and was especially popular among the poor and working class. But a series of corruption scandals led to an impeachment hearing in late 2000, and foreign direct investment plummeted in the face of concerns about Estrada’s management of the economy. Directors of the five largest Philippine business groups met in October to consider a response to help reassure foreign investors – who are critical for the vibrancy of the Philippine economy – and generated a plan to induce Estrada’s resignation. The group revived the anti-Marcos Kompil coalition, with business executives playing a central role. Actions included mass walkouts from the stock exchange by traders wearing black armbands, and a free catered “People Power Lunch” to bring laborers and the rural poor into Manila’s business district and thus increase the perceived inclusiveness of the anti-Estrada coalition. Yet Estrada remained popular with the mass of low-income Filipinos, and protests continued to be held primarily in the business districts.

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Estrada's impeachment trial continued through January 2001, but when a crucial vote to prevent the release of potentially incriminating evidence went Estrada's way in the Senate, opposition rapidly crystallized in the streets as 700,000 demonstrators marched on EDSA – site of the massive anti-Marcos rallies fifteen years before. The remarkably rapid response by demonstrators to the Senate vote was enabled by two factors. First, they had been here before: the seven years of anti-Marcos activities, and particularly the actions of early 1986, created a template for collective action aimed at ousting rulers and a canonical place – EDSA – to do so. Second, word of the gathering was sent out to anti-Estrada forces via text messages sent to cell phones and pagers. “Go to EDSA” and “wear black to mourn the death of democracy” were among the several million messages transmitted in what came to be called the “pager revolution.” Filipino telecommunications companies obliged their customers by moving mobile cell sites to EDSA in order to accommodate the increased traffic. The street gathering lasted for four days, with key military leaders joining the opposition (and showing support with combat troops and jet fighter flights over the presidential palace). After the Supreme Court declared that “the people have spoken” on the morning of January 20, Estrada ceded power to Vice President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, who was supported by opposition and military leaders.

Both the why and the how of Estrada's ouster exemplify the global shifts affecting organizations and movements. First, mass movements aimed at leadership changes have often followed increases in inequality or impoverishment. But the idea that declines in foreign direct investment and loss of favor in the international capital markets should drive popular protest and nonconstitutional changes in elected leaders is new. *The Economist* commented in a 1999 article on global financial architecture that “a domestic court can fire a bankrupt firm's management. . . . But even the most ardent globalist is unlikely to recommend that an international bankruptcy court should be able to fire a country's government.” Yet the elite-sponsored movement against Estrada in the Philippines, with cooperation from (primarily American) corporate interests, comes close to this scenario. Military coups are not historically uncommon (even those with foreign business involvement), but what distinguished Estrada's ouster is that, in a fragile democracy, perceptions of popular legitimacy behind regime changes are essential: a social movement with mass street protests conveys a sense of “the people's will” in a way that threatening moves by the military cannot.

Moreover, Philippine business elites had not misread the influence of foreign investor sentiment on the Philippine economy, as a subsequent

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episode demonstrates. The California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS), a huge and influential institutional investor, announced in February 2002 that it would no longer invest in emerging markets that failed to meet its political and financial standards and included the Philippines on its “not investment worthy” list, occasioning a 3.2 percent decline in the Manila Stock Exchange over the next three days. After lobbying by the Philippine financial secretary, CalPERS discovered that its negative rating of the Philippines was based on a clerical error, and in May restored the Philippines to the approved list. As journalists noted at the time of Estrada’s ouster, foreign investment is the lifeblood of the Philippine economy, which puts political leaders in a position directly analogous to corporate leaders with respect to their investors.

Second, information and communication technologies greatly enhanced both the speed and the reach of the movement. Revolutionary literature is centuries old, and tapes of Ayatollah Khomeini’s speeches circulated illicitly in pre-revolutionary Iran in what was called the “cassette revolution.” But the “pager revolution” of instant text messages allowed rapid, synchronous, decentralized movement activity. No prior technology enabled news events to cascade via person-to-person communication into a street gathering of several hundred thousand people within a few hours, as happened in Manila. Moreover, participation in the “movement” was not limited by geography. A website called eLagda.com sponsored an e-mail petition against Estrada and sought to gather one million “signatures” in the form of e-mail addresses, which were gathered from Filipinos around the world who logged on to the site. Both locals and expatriates were able to follow events on the Web, using local and international media. The “imagined community” (Anderson 1983) of Filipinos had achieved a global catchment area, allowing expatriates to “participate” virtually in the movement. We anticipate that the Philippine experience of 2001 will preview similar struggles in years to come.

The A16 Protests and the Antiglobalization Movement

The Philippine movement that led to President Estrada’s ouster used new technologies to achieve a traditional purpose – a change in national leadership – spurred by global economic integration. In contrast, the movement against corporate-led globalization is aimed at international economic arrangements themselves. Both in its objects and in its organizational structure, it differs from prior social movements in intriguing ways. We illustrate this with a brief description of the A16 (April 16, 2000) “Break the Bank”

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demonstration aimed at meetings among finance ministers, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank in Washington, D.C.

The global justice movement made itself vividly known during the November 1999 protest against the World Trade Organization (WTO) during its meetings in Seattle. A multinational entity for regulating global trade, the WTO was accustomed to working in relative obscurity. The Seattle meeting signaled that the institutions governing global trade and global finance, and their perceived corporate beneficiaries, were obscure no more, and subsequent meetings of the representatives of global economic power (at least those held in democracies) came to expect street protests. After the “battle in Seattle,” a template for mobilization for such meetings evolved in which information and communication technology – particularly cell phones and the World Wide Web – was essential infrastructure. Activists start by putting out a call on e-mail listservs (e-mail mailing lists organized around particular shared interests) with defining principles and directions to a Web site with further information about the mobilization. (The A16 mobilization site’s address was www.a16.org.) Because e-mails are readily forwarded to large groups by recipients, compelling calls for action can spread widely at essentially no cost. The next step, along with recruiting participants, is to build a coalition of organizational sponsors, with a large and diverse sponsorship base a sensible goal. Because the global justice movement’s ethos is one of participation and nonviolence, participants are trained both in tactics of protest and in consensus-based decision making. Analogs to corporate consulting firms have arisen to provide specialized training in advanced tactics. The Ruckus Society in Oakland, California, for instance, holds training camps and publishes manuals for activists. Its mission states: “The Ruckus Society provides environmental and human rights organizers with the tools, training, and support needed to achieve their goals. Working with a broad range of communities, organizations, and movements – from high school students to professional organizations – Ruckus facilitates the sharing of information and expertise that strengthens the capacity to change our relationship with the environment and each other” (Ruckus Society Web site).

To create more concrete infrastructure, organizers set up a “convergence center” to act as a hub, typically in an unused warehouse. The convergence center provides a location both for assembling materials for the event (e.g., giant puppets) and for getting out news from the event that can bypass traditional media (e.g., streaming video on the Web). Finally, ICTs – including cell phones and wireless e-mail communicators – enable highly

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flexible tactics on the ground. Strategically sited monitors with cell phones can keep organizers abreast of shifting circumstances, such as the locations and actions of police.

The A16 “mobile festival of resistance” in Washington, D.C., illustrates this template in action. The mobilization did not look or sound like a traditional protest march because of its conscious plan to convey spectacle and fun. Live music, drumming circles, dancing, and giant puppets appeared at several points in the rally. The list of co-sponsors was itself part of the spectacle, and included the AFL-CIO, the National Lawyers Guild, the Rainforest Action Network, the Green Party, the D.C. Lesbian Avengers, the Action Committee on Women’s Rights in Iran, and dozens of others. The speed with which the demonstration and its sponsors were assembled was perhaps unprecedented. As Chuck Kaufman of the Alliance for Global Justice put it, “It would have been impossible to organize this demonstration so close on the heels of Seattle without the Internet” (Montgomery and Santana 2000). The Internet and computer technology were essential prior to, during, and after the demonstration. As events unfolded, freelancers with digital video cameras brought back footage of the events to the media center, where it was downloaded to computers, edited, and broadcast over the Web, providing an alternative source of information to the traditional media – almost instantaneously. Later edits were recorded onto videos made available shortly thereafter by the Independent Media Center. A16 was followed within a few months by similar rallies in Quebec and Prague.

The mobilizations for global justice, as illustrated by A16, highlight several themes that are new to contemporary movements and organizations. The factors that have prompted and enabled new forms of work and new ways to organize production in the corporate world have had a similar impact on movements. First, the “production” of the protest is explicitly spectacle and fun, rather than a straightforward expression of anger or grim determination. The demonstration was itself intended to avoid the “commodified experience” that was the object of some of the protestors – ironically, since branding and spectacle are much on the minds of those running the corporations singled out by antiglobalization activists (see Klein 1999). In this sense, the postmodern esthetic washes over movements and organizations alike.

Second, ICTs were essential for enabling the mobilization and permeated its organization. Participants were recruited via the Internet, and sympathizers could make donations by credit card over the Web. Websites

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announced meeting times and places, distributed news and images, and provided a durable organizational infrastructure: when the D.C. police closed down the convergence center, the electronic underpinnings were simply accessed and operated from a new location. As might be anticipated by transaction cost economists (see, e.g., Williamson 1994), the Internet was a parameter shift in the transaction costs of collective action that allowed a few committed people to organize thousands of others at great speed with trivial out-of-pocket expenses. These lowered transaction costs further enabled a new and more flexible repertoire of on-the-ground actions and, not incidentally, enabled more decentralized and consensual decision making. Moreover, the means of integration among participants was primarily cultural rather than structural.

Third, the large and diverse group of sponsors for A16, as with similar demonstrations, highlights the fact that productions are not the output of a single more-or-less bounded actor but of temporary coalitions. The movement is not a property of a particular organization, or even a small number of SMOs (in contrast with the American civil rights movement, for instance). Rather, it is better characterized as a network or field, with any particular actions arising out of a particular subnetwork – a description exactly analogous to recent discussion of so-called network forms of organizations (e.g., Miles and Snow 1994; Powell 1990). Ironically, then, both global corporations and the movements that seek to influence or constrain them must address a contemporary sensibility of spectacle (Harvey 1990) and do so using a repertoire of organizational tactics and forms enabled by the same set of information technologies.

Some Common Themes

Times of upheaval can be fruitful, not only for the creation of new organizational forms and movement processes, but for the creation of new social theory. We argue that the social changes associated with our current era provide ample reason to reconsider the traditional separation of the study of social movements and of organizations. The shifting balance of power among states and transnational corporations has in some sense put them on a similar ground: both states and firms have to manage the perceptions of “consumers” and “investors,” and both are objects of contention by social movements. States, such as the Philippines, become subject to economic vagaries dictated by the sentiments (and clerical errors) of distant investors. By the same token, transnational corporations are increasingly “stateless” in

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the sense that their activities are rarely contained within particular nations, and their decision makers are in effect consumers of institutional structures offered by states. But by their very prominence firms have become subject to the kinds of activism previously experienced primarily by states: Shell, Monsanto, and Nike were all targets of global campaigns intended to alter what they did and how they did it. As politics, corporations are subject to challenges both from within (by the “citizens” who work for them) and from without (by activists and consumers).

There is a further irony: just as corporations have come to be perceived as global centers of power populated by citizens demanding rights, on a par with nation-states, they turn out (on some accounts) to be mere legal fictions with the character of quicksilver. From a high modernist conception of the organization as a boundary-maintaining actor, we have arrived at a view of the firm as a shifting network, organizing production through webs of contracts but with “no body to kick, no soul to damn.” The declining transaction costs of contracting out production and other nonessential activities, enabled in part by new information and communication technologies, put organizations on a par with movements, assembling networks of participants for relatively short-lived productions.

ICTs do not merely lower the transaction costs of established forms of collective action, however; they also enable new repertoires of contention for movements and organizations. This is well known in business, even after the electronic commerce bubble burst: few aspects of how business gets done in the West have *not* been affected by ICTs. But the speed, flexibility, global reach, and customization made possible for business is equally true of social movements. As the Philippine case illustrates, text messaging can be a powerful mobilizing device, and the World Wide Web enables a global catchment area for participation and activism. A16 shows how Web sites, cell phones, and a few observers in tall buildings can address marchers on the ground with shifting local terrain. And in each case the prospects for widespread engagement are enabled on a scale previously unknown. Indeed, simultaneous protests against the imminent U.S. invasion of Iraq on February 15, 2003, took place across North and South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia, involving upward of six million participants. This unprecedented global antiwar movement is impossible to imagine without contemporary information and communication technologies; the *New York Times* saw this as a manifestation of the world’s second superpower – global public opinion. The prospects for genuinely global, synchronized social movements had finally been realized.

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Finally, for much of the type of postindustrial collective action we have observed in recent times, the “output” of the action is image, perception, emotion. For prior movements representing clear collective interests, the intended perception is one of WUNC: we’re worthy, unified, numerous, and committed. Production was aimed at enhancing power holders’ assessments of each of these four dimensions. For the global justice movement represented by A16, on the other hand, participation in itself is the point. Spectacle may not be relevant for demonstrating WUNC, but it makes for a much more engaging movement, in which participation is its own reward. That is, it is perhaps engagement per se, rather than its consequences, which is valued by participants. Contests are ceremonial; victories are virtual. This idea has its counterpart in the corporate world, where brand management and investor relations (professions oriented toward shaping the perceptions of consumers and investors, respectively) are among the ascendant professions of recent years. Naomi Klein (1999: 4) summarized: pioneers such as Nike and Tommy Hilfiger “make the bold claim that producing goods was only an incidental part of their operations, and that thanks to recent victories in trade liberalization and labor-law reform, they were able to have their products made for them by contractors, many of them overseas. What these companies produced primarily were not things, they said, but *images* of their brands. Their real work lay not in manufacturing but in marketing.” “The culture of the simulacrum comes to life in a society where exchange value has been generalized to the point at which the very memory of use value is effaced, a society of which Guy Debord has observed . . . that in it ‘the image has become the final form of commodity reification’” (Jameson 1991: 18).

Implications

We have argued that what organizations and movements do, and how they do it, have rotated on the same axis, and that the greater integration of the global economy has helped shift the objects of contention from states to corporations and multinational agencies. But what is to be done in theory? What difference does all this make for research? The preceding chapters of this book provide both theoretical and empirical answers to this question. We here highlight some broad implications for research practice that are taken up in more detail elsewhere in the book: the utility of taking a *field-level perspective* on organizations and movements, and the centrality of *social mechanisms* to the types of theoretical explanations that are produced.

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First, when social systems are not meaningfully organized into bounded, countable collective actors, as we have argued is true for much of the contemporary organizational world, it makes sense to take a field-level approach. Scholars of social movements have long recognized the value of viewing social movements not as singular “actors” but as fields made up of congeries of actors; there was no organization that was contiguous with the American civil rights movement. By the same token, understanding the evolving structures of areas of activity in economic life, such as health care provision, requires a perspective that transcends “organization” and “industry” to take into account the broader system of governance and contestation. McAdam and Scott (this volume) proposed that a field-level approach to organizations and movements highlights how a common set of questions can fruitfully guide inquiry into both realms. Institutional theorists such as DiMaggio and Powell (1983) and Scott and Meyer (1983) have argued for the value of a field-level approach to organizational life, but McAdam and Scott find that a thoroughgoing field-level analysis is more broadly applicable and illustrate it with findings from detailed studies of historical change in which the boundaries of fields, the identities of actors, and the rules of play changed substantially over time.

Second, as we have hinted previously, the basic dynamics of collective action are common across movements and organizations, and both confront similar “human resource challenges” such as recruitment, retention, socialization, coordination, and so on. But to recognize what is common requires working at the level of social mechanisms – “a set of interacting parts – an assembly of elements producing an effect not inherent in any one of them. A mechanism is not so much about ‘nuts and bolts’ as about ‘cogs and wheels’ . . . – the wheelwork or agency by which an effect is produced” (Hernes 1998: 74). Mechanisms, according to Hedstrom and Swedberg (1998), provide “an intermediary level of analysis in-between pure description and story-telling, on the one hand, and universal social laws, on the other.” As such, they are well suited to the types of “collective action by ambiguously-bounded actors” that we have described in contemporary movements and organizations. McAdam and colleagues accorded central place to the study of mechanisms in their recent effort to reorient social movement theory (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001), and in this volume Campbell explores processes and mechanisms common to both organization theory and social movement theory.

This book seeks to show concrete research consequences exemplifying the kind of crossover for which we have argued. One purpose of the book

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has been to show how concepts developed in one of the domains (organization theory or social movement theory) are useful for the other. For example, theorists of organizations have contemplated alternative structures for organizations with many subunits that are geographically dispersed, and when and why they work as they do. Chapters on social movement – franchising” (by McCarthy) and on transnational social movement organizations (by Smith) document how these concepts help illuminate relatively new organizational forms in the social movement sector. Conversely, social movement scholars have described movement/counter movement dynamics during struggles over policy, which provides an enlightening framework for analyzing the struggles among the shareholder rights movement and more-or-less organized corporate elites over state-level corporate law (in the chapter by Vogus and Davis).

These chapters build on a long and fitful tradition picked up on in the article by Zald and Berger (1978) on movements within organizations. But the years since this paper was published have seen great advances in theory and methods in both organizational studies and social movement studies. Social network analysis and dynamic statistical methods, for instance, have greatly expanded the empirical sophistication and rigor of both areas and have enabled more subtle (and testable) cross-level theorizing. Thus, although we have argued that the current period is especially characterized by examples of crossover, the theory and research we present are useful to explain phenomena from earlier times (see Schneiberg and Soule, this volume). The authors of the chapters have been particularly attentive to highlighting the added value of the combined approach. We believe that the conjunction is especially useful for the analysis of movements that are global in character, but also useful for organizational change movements. For instance, those leading innovation efforts in organizations may draw implicitly or explicitly on social movement-like processes and management styles (Strang and Jung, this volume) in promoting innovations and change. We hope that other researchers are inspired by these examples to study and build theory from the new round of social movements in and around organizations that we are witnessing today.