ABSTRACT

*How Do Societal Social Movements Penetrate Organizations? Environmental Impact and Organizational Response*

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The large social movements of the last half-century, such as the environmental movement, the women's movement, the civil rights movement, and others have contributed to changing the way we live. Much of their impact occurs through changing organizational practices and policies. Yet we do not have an adequate theory or framework for understanding how social movements directly and indirectly impinge on and attempt to change organizations. Moreover, since organizations may differ in their response to social movement demands, an adequate theory must account for the variations in organizational response.

This paper presents a middle-range synthetic theory of the impact of social movements on organizations. It draws upon a variety of literatures, including implementation theory, legal mobilization theory, compliance readiness theory, neo-institutional theory, and political opportunity theory. The core of the paper is presented in three parts: 1) Environmental impact: culture, direct impacts and indirect impacts. 2) Commitment, Capacity and Organizational Response. 3) Political Process and Opportunity in Shaping Response.