Protect to damage?

Institutional work, unintended consequences and institutional dynamics

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Abstract

How does institutional work to uphold an institution unintentionally challenge that institution? To answer this question, I trace institutional work of proponents of change and the norm majority – members of the public who show rectitude vis-à-vis perceived provocation against an established institution, in the context of America's first bird protection movement. A historical process analysis reveals that institutional work unintentionally compromises institutions because the work can be seen as public conformity to the established institution. A model developed from the findings provides a more refined understanding of unintended consequences in institutional studies.

Keywords

Institutional work, unintended consequences, norm majority, public conformity

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“We are half ruined by conformity, but we should be wholly ruined without it.”

— Charles Dudley Warner, *My Summer in a Garden*

Institutional studies have increasingly turned to social actors and their action to create or resist institutional change. They have documented how proponents and opponents of change engage in different types of institutional work — purposive action with the goal of creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Lawrence, Suddaby, & Leca, 2009). Institutional studies have also integrated the social movement perspective into the analysis, counterposing challengers to champions of change (Guérard, Bode, & Gustafsson, 2013; Schneiberg, 2013; Schneiberg & Lounsbury, 2008). In considering dynamics between opposing parties, these studies underscore purposive action and its intended outcomes, such as the successful introduction of alternative arrangements or the maintenance of pre-existing institutions.

These studies tend to attribute substantial causal efficacy to purposive action. However, action can lead to unintended consequences (De Zwart, 2015; Merton, 1936; Mica, 2015; Pierson, 2000; Portes, 2000) that are ‘different from what was wanted at the moment of carrying out the act, and the want of which was a reason for carrying it out’ (Baert, 1991, p. 2). This suggests that institutional work aiming to maintain an institution may end up transgressing the institution. The literature on institutional work, thus, has acknowledged its relative neglect of unintended consequences (Lawrence et al., 2009). Social movement scholars have also cautioned against overstating the importance of movement participants’ strategic action (Giugni, 1998; Giugni, McAdam, & Tilly, 1999). Nevertheless, we know little about how and why unintended consequences occur. This not only reflects a gap in our understanding

of the link between institutional work and institution-level outcomes but also, more fundamentally, a lack of theorization of the sources and consequences of institutional change. I address this gap by asking the following question: How does institutional work, aiming to uphold a particular institution, unintentionally challenge that institution while preserving others?

To answer this question, I rely on simplified concepts and assumptions. As a working definition, I view unintended consequences as unexpected, unwelcome outcomes that contravene the intent of institutional work (Merton, 1936, p. 898; Portes, 2000). Although not all unintended consequences are undesirable (Boudon, 1982), the existing literature notes that it is considered unwelcome when the end state of one's action is contrary to his or her intent (Pierson, 2000). In terms of actors, I focus on proponents of change and an important yet neglected collectivity: norm majority — a subset of the public that shows rectitude vis-à-vis perceived provocation against the pre-existing social order in which both actors are historically embedded. They may become potential allies or likely recruits because they are the people from whom the proponents' action derives its social approval. Building on the institutional literature and social movement theory, I also incorporate two assumptions. First, the collective action of participants in a social movement is considered institutional work because they are purposely creating new institutional arrangements or transforming existing ones (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Second, proponents are likely to act in adherence to established institutions (e.g., social norms) to garner support from the public (Schneiberg, 2013).

Empirically, I situate my investigation in the context of America's first bird conservation move- ment, between 1887 and 1920. I trace the institutional work of movement actors and members of the norm majority. I limit the focus of my analysis

to an established institution and nascent institutions. The established institution here refers to homosocial norms—a society-wide shared conception of the complete separation of the social roles and domains of men and women. In contrast, nascent institutions include bird protection (against plume hunting) and new womanhood (limited to certain groups of women) because each of these is a relatively new local typification of habitualized action related to how individuals do things (Lawrence, Hardy, & Phillips, 2002, p. 283). Building on a historical process analysis, I develop a model of unintended consequences. The model deciphers how institutional work could end up unexpectedly transgressing the institution that initially enabled the work and unintentionally reproducing other institutions contrary to that institution.

This study contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it advances the literature on unintended consequences by identifying a social mechanism that brings about such outcomes: public conformity (Adut, 2005; Kuran, 1995; Willer, Kuwabara, & Macy, 2009). The revelation of this mechanism broadens our knowledge of the circumstances under which such consequences unfold. Second, by focusing on the unintended effects of institutional work on institutions, this study fills a gap in the institutional work literature (Lawrence, Leca, & Zilber, 2013; Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Lawrence et al., 2009; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). This study extends the literature by explicating how and why institutional work entails the unintended transgression of institutions. Third, this study complements institutional analysis inspired by social movement theory, namely, the dualistic model of institutional change (Guérard et al., 2013; Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2006). The extant model underscores conflicts between proponents and opponents who intentionally undermine each other's action. This study adds value to the model by considering an understudied collectivity, the norm majority, who are embedded in the same

established institution as proponents and thus become likely recruits or potential allies. In considering interaction between the proponents and members of the norm majority, this study shows how a social movement can produce a situation where institutional work may lead to unintended consequences. Taken together, this study provides a more refined understanding of unintended consequences in institutional studies.

Theory

Public conformity and norm majority Existing studies have shown that institutional work is simultaneously guided by and reinforces established sets of institutional arrangements (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Lawrence et al., 2009). When social actors attempt to change the status quo, they often try to leverage an established institution to frame, interpret and address the need for change (Khan, Munir, & Willmott, 2007). As the actors draw on extant cultural registers to make sense of their institutional work, they can increase the public appeal of their work that appears natural and familiar. In doing so, they can not only justify their action but also reaffirm society's shared normative and cognitive understandings (Gray, Purdy, & Ansari, 2015).

While many studies have underscored the importance of resonance with an established institution (Gray et al., 2015; Schneiberg & Soule, 2005), few consider resonance a form of public conformity: the manner in which one shows conformity in public. Social actors usually see conformity to a pre-existing institution, such as social norms, as appropriate as long as they believe that others believe it is appropriate and others internalize the institution (Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Kuran, 1995). Such an overestimation of others' private conformity increases the pressure to conform

publicly. When social actors conform to the established institution as a result of perceived pressure, they must demonstrate how genuine their conviction is (Willer et al., 2009). To prove their sincerity, they oppose not only actual violators but also anyone who apparently fails or refuses to denounce the transgressors (Axelrod, 1986; Shinada, Yamagishi, & Ohmura, 2004). By marking certain individuals and behavior as deviant, they can assert their core values and purify the supporters, such as themselves. In this regard, proponents of change are not the only ones who demonstrate conformity. Anyone who is embedded in the established institution publicly conforms.

As public conformity is prevalent, proponents' institutional work is subject to norm majority's interpretations. The majority is a subset of the public united by some level of identification with the shared normative and cognitive understanding to which the proponents also adhere. Unlike the passive audience, the majority often administers informal sanctions to influence public conformity (Adut, 2005, p. 218; Ellickson, 2001). Regardless of whether proponents consciously or unconsciously tap into the established institution (Gray et al., 2015; Schneiberg & Soule, 2005), their action is likely to be interpreted by the norm majority in accordance with the established institution. When the institution is believed to be flouted by the proponents' work, members of the norm majority attempt to rectify the situation (Axelrod, 1986). In response, the proponents publicly show their conformity, which could invite reaction from the norm majority.

Response to conformity and unintended consequences While proponents of change may encounter a group of direct opponents who thwart their efforts (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Schneiberg & Lounsbury, 2008), they always face the norm

majority because their collective action is calculated and designed to impress the public and win its support (Rucht, 2004, p. 213). As the majority reacts to the proponents' public conformity regardless of the actual conformity to the established social order, the purposeful development of new institutions can lead to something different from what the proponents originally intended (DiMaggio, 1988; Gray et al., 2015). Such phenomena, 'perverse effects' or 'rebound effects', have long been considered in the literature on unintended consequences (De Zwart, 2015; Mica, 2015; Pierson, 2000; Portes, 2000). These effects are likely to occur because the need to create new institutions often originates in local problems or difficulties to which individuals respond in their everyday practices (Lounsbury & Crumley, 2007; Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012). More importantly, these local problems tend to be shaped by bounded rationality, limited knowledge (Boudon, 1982), wishful thinking and ill-informed decisions (Merton, 1936). As a result, the proponents of change are likely to miscalculate others' responses at the time of their initial action and to encounter perverse effects of the action.

Although the literature on unintended consequences often suggests individual-level cognitive limitations as the culprit behind unexpected ramifications, it is worth noting that social actors' interests, their knowledge and decision to act are conditioned by widely held norms and schemas (Barley & Tolbert, 1997; Bitektine & Haack, 2015). Their action to create and maintain a nascent institution is thus likely to be interpreted in accordance with established normative systems and cognitive understandings. This could lead to a reaction from the norm majority that may contradict the intent of the original action. Upon learning of the rebound effects, proponents often engage in maintaining the nascent institution by responding to contingencies or demands of the present situation (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). When

the proponents demonstrate conformity to the established institution, their corrective action to accommodate the norm majority's demands may precipitate another response from the majority. Accordingly, they may encounter new contingencies to which certain adjustments have to be made. The entire process suggests responding to each other's public conformity, which potentially alters both nascent and established institutions.

Previous studies on competing institutional arrangements have documented relationships between different groups of individuals (Greenwood, Raynard, Kodeih, Micelotta, & Lounsbury, 2011; Reay & Hinings, 2009). Opposing parties espouse antithetical institutions. Their ongoing confrontation changes and reproduces these institutions, and a settlement of their conflicts becomes a new institution that might supersede the older ones (Guérard et al., 2013; Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2006; Schneiberg & Soule, 2005; Smets & Jarzabkowski, 2013). Although these studies significantly broaden our understanding of institutional dynamics, their focus on conflicts between proponents and opponents largely overlooks the role of the public in the light of public conformity. We know little about how interaction of change and members of the norm majority brings about unintended consequences despite their display of conformity to the same established institution. Overall, this study seeks to understand how the results of both actors' institutional work, in adherence to the established institution, not only unexpectedly compromise that institution but also shape nascent institutions off course.

Research context

In considering conformity to a pre-existing institution, I chose a research context in which such conformity was clearly important and evident (Eisenhardt, 1989). The

empirical setting is the first movement for bird protection in the United States. The movement was embedded in the larger context of late 19th- and early 20th-century American society. I considered an established institution at the time, namely, homosocial norms, along with two nascent institutions – bird protection and new womanhood.

Homosocial norms as a preexisting established institution Homosocial norms divided society into two: the 'public' sphere of men versus the 'private' sphere of women (primarily the home) (Cott, 1997; Griswold, 1988; Smith-Rosenberg, 1986). In the public sphere, men could participate in legal, political and economic activities and develop their independent selfhood. In the private sphere, women were considered mothers; they served both as moral preachers teaching their children virtues and as moral guardians securing their homes against libertines and degenerates in the public sphere (Cott, 1997; Griswold, 1988). Women were expected to take primary responsibility for their family and had few opportunities to commit themselves to personal development. The female sphere and roles existed in opposition to their male counterparts. Conformity to these norms made each social domain exclusive to only one gender.

New womanhood as a nascent institution New womanhood, or the expansion of the female sphere, arose among an elite group that adhered to homosocial norms (Cott, 1997; Muncy, 1991). The upper class groomed its daughters for their eventual marital role as virtuous mothers. In the early 19th century, the need to teach daughters morals and manners gave rise to women's seminaries. Soon, being taught at a seminary became an upper-class privilege (Crocker, 2006). Although the

curricula were initially limited to home economics, dancing and etiquette, these female-only schools began to teach their students unconventional subjects, such as Greek and geometry. The precept of teaching girls these new subjects gradually appealed to the prevailing view of 'the most enlightened and cultivated mother and sister' (Crocker, 2006, p. 51). Women with knowledge became attractive to suitors, who wanted to flaunt their wives' privileged education in elite society. Highly educated ladies could also work as professional teachers and tutors, although most of them quit their jobs for marriage.

The working class's observance of homosocial norms also ushered women into an uncharted domain. Because the norms excluded men from female-only dressing rooms, skilled women joined the apparel business. In New York City and Boston, these women composed 98% of all milliners and dress and mantua makers by 1870 (Gamber, 1992, 1997). While self-sufficient women emerged in a few industrial cities, in the South, women entered the market because of shortages in the male labour force and of marriageable men after the Civil War (Faust, 1996; Jabour, 2007). Although the gradual increase in female proprietors and highly educated ladies began to shape social beliefs around the woman's activities beyond the home, new womanhood was not yet entrenched in society. A woman's education and mercantile experience were largely believed to support her home, which was always considered her social sphere (Crocker, 2006, p. 41).

Bird protection as a nascent institution In the late 19th century, ornithologists and recreational hunters organized to save plume-worthy birds. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, women's headdresses adorned with feathers or stuffed birds were popular, especially among upper-class women. Because the delicate plumes

symbolized beauty and femininity (Harper's Bazaar, 1888, 1889), ladies' display of womanliness led to a huge demand for exotic feathers and the growth of millinery businesses. On the one hand, this led an increasing number of working-class women to enter the millinery market. On the other hand, both millinery shops and the plume-decorated hats on display made women's public lives visible. Contemporary newspapers and magazines publicized women's headdresses, treating them as a derangement of the proper societal order, rather than just flamboyant fashion (e.g., female milliners were often described as public women; Gamber, 1997). In this social climate, a group of upper-class men established the National Audubon Society (henceforth, NAS) and promoted a new set of practices to save birds:

> "[T]he birds are killed for millinery purposes. So long as fashion demands bird feathers, the birds will be slaughtered. The remedy is to be found in the awakening of a healthy public sentiment on the subject…To so present the case to the people as to awaken this corrective sentiment is the special work contemplated by the Audubon Society" (National Audubon Society, 1887, p. 20).

When NAS men challenged the popular practice of wearing plume-decorated hats, they encountered direct opposition from men who defended hunting birds for feathers. For instance, a group of congressmen vehemently rejected any limit on plume hunting, with one of them saying:

> "I [James A. Reed, Senator from Missouri] really honestly want to know why there should be any sympathy or sentiment about a long-legged, long-beaked, long-necked bird that lives in swamps, and eats tadpoles and fish and crawfish and things

> of that kind; why we should worry ourselves into a frenzy because some lady adorns her hat with one of its feathers, which appears to be the only use it has" (The National Association of Audubon Societies, 1913, p. 331).

The NAS men fought against their opponents in legal and political domains that women had not yet entered into. They lobbied Congress to enact the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, which placed all migratory species under federal protection (National Association of Audubon Societies, 1918). This particular legalization of bird protection, agreed between the US and Great Britain (acting on behalf of Canada), was considered the ultimate victory of the NAS over its opponents and can easily be understood as the intended outcome of the NAS men's endeavor.

However, focusing exclusively on the intended outcome may obscure possible consequences of interaction between proponents of change and various actors other than opponents. Considering the institutions discussed above, I traced and examined the events following the male NAS leaders' denouncement of women in feathered hats, upper-class women's engagement in the public movement and responses from the public. I chose their action based on their intentions shaped by the institutions described above.

Methods

Data collection

NAS official magazine - primary data source To trace the unintended consequences of institutional work, I studied the NAS and its archival documents. The organization's official monthly (bimonthly since 1899) magazine documented the actions of movement actors and the public. It served as social media through which

people exchanged their thoughts and opinions on bird conservation. It helps me understand how the idea and practice of saving wild birds was shaped, along with who supported or challenged the protection of birds. I perused articles published from 1887 (inaugural piece) to 1889 and, after the organization's 10-year recess, from 1899 to 1920. Of the 7,765 articles published, 4,432 were used in the analysis after excluding articles that were unclear about a contributor's gender or contained only scientific observations (e.g., a migratory bird census), fables or mythologies.

Newspapers, magazines and books - secondary sources My secondary sources consisted of newspaper articles, magazine articles, and books about bird conservation and American society between the late 19th and early 20th centuries. I used these data not only to clarify and triangulate observations on various actors' institutional work but also to make sense of the intent and unintended consequences of that work.

First, I collected and read 399 articles on the issue of bird hunting and wearing plume-decorated hats published in The New York Times between 1865 and 1920. Second, I collected and read the following magazines: Bird notes and news, published by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds from 1903 to 1920, and Harper's Bazaar, from 1888 to 1900, which targeted middle- to upper-class women. Using plume sales data from the former, I ruled out economic explanations for bird protection. The latter, which promoted ideal social conduct of women, furthered my understanding of the era's social norms. Lastly, I used contemporary books and modern documents to understand social milieus at that time.

Data analysis

My data analysis followed established techniques and procedures for interpretive (Lawrence & Dover, 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and historical research (Bloom, 2015; Heise, 1989). It consisted of a series of steps. I employed the TAMS Analyzer, which is Mac-based software equivalent to NVivo (Weinstein, 2010), to organize and (re)code the primary data. I then used Ethno, which is designed to assist in understanding sequential events in historical narratives, to build a logical chronology of those events (Griffin, 1993; Heise, 1989).

The goal of the first step was to generate an initial understanding of multiple institutions based on historical data (Lounsbury & Crumley, 2007). I attempted to grasp the pre-existing and emerging institutions in late 19th century America. While reading the primary and secondary materials, I began by identifying the key events, typical cases and exemplary actors representing different institutions. At the end of this step, I was able to refine my focus to three institutions: homosocial norms, new womanhood and bird protection.

In the second step, I entered the NAS magazine articles into the TAMS Analyzer and coded them based on *in vivo* words. These included phrases, terms, photos, pictures and descriptions offered by participants in the bird protection movement, along with quotes from members of the public, many of whom later joined the NAS. These formed first-order concepts. I constantly compared the coded texts and attempted to find possible patterns.

The third step of the analysis involved looking for links among the first-order concepts so that I could collapse them into second-order themes. I returned to the three institutions identified during the first step. I then read the first-order concepts while keeping those institutions in mind. This stage of the analysis consisted of two mini-steps: (1) identifying the first-order concepts with regard to the intention to

reproduce one of these institutions; and (2) revisiting those concepts as institutional work to create or maintain one of the three institutions mentioned above. In line with one of the three institutions, I first focused on and made sense of individuals' manifest intentions (i.e., goals, plans, missions and objectives) at the time that they took action. When the intention of one's action was not announced, I engaged in counterfactual methods used by historians (Bloom, 2015), asking questions such as 'would the subsequent action have occurred if not for the preceding action?' and 'what if there had been no institution as a cause of action X; would action X have occurred anyway?' to rule out implausible goals and objectives and to find the most likely intention related to each action. After identifying intentions, I categorized each action as institutional work of either creating or maintaining one of the three institutions. I did not consider intentional violations, assuming that social actors show their conformity to existing institutions and it is not practical to overtly disrupt nascent institutions, which are not yet fully established. Throughout this step, I limited the possibility of institutional work that could simultaneously create or maintain multiple institutions. At this point, I predicted the intended outcomes of each institutional work based on the institution shaping its aim.

The fourth step involved comparing the intended outcomes of institutional work with events that were incongruent with these results. This step was to identify unintended consequences: unexpected outcomes that conflict with original intent. I traced each case of institutional work and subsequent events to determine whether they corresponded to the expected desirable results; they were usually celebrated and recognized by the relevant actors. Once I marked events that appeared to conflict with the expected outcomes, I used Ethno to not only build a chronology of the progression of institutional work but also ensure logical connections between events.

The last step involved making sense of events that are unintended consequences of institutional work. I went back and forth between these events and collapsed themes to understand the events with regard to institutions other than the institution that was supposed to be reproduced by the original institutional work. This approach helped clarify how unintended consequences of institutional work transpired. It also enabled me to create links among institutional work, its unintended consequences and institutions. Figure 1 shows the final data structure. Additional supporting evidence is shown in Table 1.

Insert FIGURE 1 about here

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Findings

This study explores how institutional work can bring about unintended transgressions of institutions. Proponents of nascent institutions – bird protection and new womanhood – engaged in creating and maintaining these institutions; bird protectionists aimed to stop the killing of birds for feathered fashion, whereas espousers of new womanhood tried to expand their sphere beyond the home. As these actors were embedded in the same established institution – homosocial norms – the public, especially the norm majority, interpreted their institutional work according to the norms. The proponents' work triggered responses from the majority to maintain homosocial norms. This reaction prompted the proponents to work on maintaining their nascent institutions in adherence to the shared norms. The chain of these actors' institutional work is summarized in Figure 2. Throughout the reciprocal processes,

institutional work unintentionally transgressed both nascent and established institutions.

Insert FIGURE 2 about here

Proponents of bird protection and the norm majority

Proponents' institutional work of creating bird protection To combat feathered fashion, male NAS leaders framed the consumption of feathered hats as unmotherly, uncivilized behavior, in line with an established institution: homosocial norms. This type of institutional work 'changes normative associations' (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, p. 224), re-forging the connections between wearing plume-decorated hats and the cultural foundations of the practice. In doing so, the male leaders reminded people of women's ideal social conduct in the private sphere, as the following excerpt suggests:

> "One lady said to me, 'I think there is a great deal of sentiment wasted on the birds. There are so many of them, they never will be missed, any more than mosquitoes! I shall put birds on my new bonnet.' *This was a fond and devoted mother, a cultivated and accomplished woman*." [emphasis added] (National Audubon Society, 1887, p. 13)

By stressing that 'devoted' and 'cultivated' mothers must not put feathers on their headdresses, male leaders not only justified bird protection in adherence to broader social norms. They also alluded to the fact that upper-class women consuming plumes flouted homosocial norms, as did female milliners working in the

market (Gamber, 1992, 1997). Their denouncement of women in feathered hats, thus, prompted upper-class women's responses.

Norm majority's maintenance work as a response Upper-class women reacted to the male leaders' work by showing the sincerity of their conformity to the norms, in which these men were also embedded. Especially for the upper class, the visible violation of these norms was scandalous and informed the general public about both the existence of transgressions and the 'shaky' norms that everyone apparently upheld (Adut, 2005). As the following excerpt shows, upper-class women began to 'valorize' themselves (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, p. 232) as civilizers and moral preachers:

> "Madame Lilli Lehmann…made an eloquent appeal to women to cease from *feather-wearing, which she characterized as a form of barbarism*…Madame Lehmann writes: 'Tell the [state Audubon] Societies that I take the greatest interest in their work, that I do everything I can, and every minute, if the occasion offers, to protect the birds. Tell them, also, that it is the duty of everyone to speak and to do something every day for the cause; that it is not sufficient to give a dollar or two — that alone will never help us. *It is the living word, the reasons given, the good example and the teaching to everyone that can bring us further in civilization*.'" [emphasis added] (The National Association of Audubon Societies, 1899, p. 103)

When the male leaders questioned the moral status of women in feathered hats, they appeared to preach against an immoral act of wearing plume-decorated hats. According to homosocial norms, however, such moral preaching was women's job, not men's. This prompted upper-class women's valorizing work and subsequent

participation in the NAS, even if that meant working with men in the public sphere. These upper-class women demonized individuals such as female milliners and plume hunters and importers. In doing so, the women's work enacted institutionalized beliefs of the ideal woman as a cultivated, civilized, moral guardian (Cott, 1997; Griswold, 1988).

Nevertheless, the participation of upper-class women in the NAS contravened the intention underlying the male leaders' original work: the protection of birds against plume consumption. In adherence to homosocial norms, these new female participants continued to wear plume-decorated hats that symbolized their femininity (Harper's Bazaar, 1888, 1889). As the following excerpt suggests, female members sermonized about womanly virtue at official NAS meetings and social functions while wearing feathered headdresses:

> "…I opened my remarks with an appeal for the Redbreast, and then urged the club-women [female members] to cease the wearing of aigrettes and the plumage of wild birds as ornaments for their hats…" (The National Association of Audubon Societies, 1913, p. 423)

In sum, the male leaders' institutional work to advance bird protection prompted a reaction from the norm majority: upper-class women. These women's maintenance work led to the presence of women in plume-decorated hats among bird protectionists. This challenged the NAS men's save-the-birds cause, leading to corrective action.

Proponents' reaction to the norm majority's work

Proponents' maintenance work as a response As soon as the male NAS leaders noticed the plume-loving bird protectionists, they swiftly began 'policing' work to ensure individual compliance with the NAS goal (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, p. 231). They first distinguished two groups of female participants: 'the moderates', who wore questionable plumes or feathers in disguise, and 'the total abstainers', who stopped wearing all feathered headdresses (National Association of Audubon Societies, 1899, p. 170; 1900, p. 33). The leaders continued to monitor the behavior of 'the moderates' to ensure their allegiance to bird protection, as the following excerpt indicates:

> "Audubonites [members and organizers of the NAS] may be divided into two classes as regards their attitude toward the wearing of feathers, — the moderates and the total abstainers. The moderates hold that they violate none of the interests of bird protection in its fullest sense by wearing the plumes of game or food birds, or those of the Ostrich, which is as legitimately raised for its feathers as a sheep for its wool…" (The National Association of Audubon Societies, 1899, p. 170)

The male leaders' policing work was in the manner of genuine bird protectionists. However, their response to contingencies (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Smets & Jarzabkowski, 2013) failed to sanction deviants from homosocial norms. No female participants were expelled. More importantly, the enforcement strategy did not impede women's participation in the public movement. The result was increasing female membership (52% by the end of World War I), making the NAS heterosocial and transgressing gendered social spheres. Soon, the conventional male-only organizations in the public sphere lampooned the NAS and its anti-plumage movement, as illustrated by an article published by the Cooper ornithological club:

> "[A]n Audubonist [members and organizers of the NAS] who 'declines to wear mangled bird-remains on her hat or as trimming for her clothing…registers a kick against being placed in the same class (of A. O. U. [the American Ornithologists Union] membership) with Audubonists and fad protectionists.'" (The National Association of Audubon Societies, 1900, p. 161)

Accordingly, the male leaders of the NAS began to prove their adherence to the norms. They deliberately reframed and valorized women as 'bird mothers' who protected eggs and hatchlings (National Association of Audubon Societies, 1904, p. 40). The depiction of women as mothers did not meet any rejection from members of the NAS nor the public because the motherly role was both desirable and appropriate for women. It appealed to women who already adhered to their legitimate role of caring. Overall, both the male proponents' policing work to maintain bird protection and their subsequent valorizing work continued to enable women to join the NAS.

Proponents of new womanhood and the norm majority

Proponents' institutional work of maintaining new womanhood As female members of the norm majority continued to join the NAS, they apparently crossed gendered social spheres. These repeated transgressions provided favorable conditions for a certain group of women who wanted to expand their sphere beyond the home. Margaret Olivia Slocum, later known as Mrs. Russell Sage, was one such female advocate championing women's advancement into higher education, paid work and professions (Crocker, 2006, p. 34). Her contribution to the NAS advanced new womanhood by 'embedding' women's voices and work in the public sphere (Lawrence & Suddaby,

2006, p. 233). She specified her goal: the protection of robins, which was considered to be of interest to men. Unlike most female donors, who remained anonymous, Mrs. Sage publicly stated that she wanted her donations to be used to achieve her goal, as shown in the following excerpt:

> "Mrs. Russell Sage gave to the National Association $500, *to start a special fund for the protection of the Robin*. A few days later she contributed $5,000, *to be used in pushing the work of the Association in the southern states*, and, at the same time, expressed her deep concern that the Robin, which is legally declared a game bird in some of the states, should be given adequate protection. As Mrs. Sage further states that she will provide $5,000 annually for the next two years…" [emphasis added] (The National Association of Audubon Societies, 1910, p. 167)

Following this donation, the "Mrs. Russell Sage Fund" officially implemented Mrs. Sage's mission at the NAS (National Association of Audubon Societies, 1910, 1911, 1912). The fund provided female participants with new opportunities to expand women's social domain. It was spent on employing and educating new female field agents (e.g., Miss Katharine H. Stuart in Virginia) and helping female secretaries of the state Audubon Societies. As the fund financially and normatively assisted women in actively engaging in the public movement, female participants' work further benefited bird protection. Female NAS members travelled, gave public lectures and even met with male legislators to urge them to change state laws (National Association of Audubon Societies, 1913, 1918). They began to hold positions that advanced the save-the-birds cause, including as editors of the official magazine (e.g., Mrs. Mabel Osgood Wright and Alice Hall Walter) and presidents of state Audubon

Societies. Overall, the public contributions of female members gradually became incorporated into the organization's agenda.

Norm majority's maintenance work as a response Whereas female participants contributed to the expansion of women's social sphere, the response from the public maintained homosocial norms. In particular, members of the norm majority 'routinized' the normative foundations of gender behavior into their everyday practices (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, p. 233). This reaction led the NAS women to further engage in the womanly work of teaching children traditional gender roles and reproducing separate social spheres.

On the surface, the NAS women's work resulted in unprecedented cooperation with potential recruits: teachers, who were mostly women. Together, they successfully mobilized students and operated junior Audubon classes across the country. The junior classes played a pioneering role in the education of the public and the annual recruitment of new members (National Association of Audubon Societies, 1914). While this could represent female achievement in bird protection, female collaborators in each class dedicated themselves to teaching boys birdhouse building while letting girls watch, sketch specimens or prepare bird food (National Association of Audubon Societies, 1914). Not only the educational content but also the act of teaching children confirmed the women's motherly role – often celebrated by presenting photos of boys who made birdhouses and crediting female teachers for their instruction, as follows:

> [A description of a classroom photo] “There are thirty-nine pupils in the room, thirty-four of whom made bird-boxes...Miss Blanche Robinson is the teacher." (The National Association of Audubon Societies, 1915, p. 222).

In addition, the success of the junior classes led women to be more engaged in the organization of classes than in any other activity. Very few female members were able to do ‘manly, scientific work’ such as surveying migratory birds and patrolling rookeries, and even fewer held senior positions. The number of state Audubon Societies headed by female presidents and secretaries decreased by 40% between 1916 and 1919 (National Association of Audubon Societies, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919). Training and educating female members in the same way as their male counterparts became rarer. Instead, the NAS women and the norm majority alike continued to infuse traditional gender roles into their day-to-day routines, contrary to Mrs. Sage’s original intent. Ultimately, the more successful the junior classes became, the more likely they were to reproduce homosocial norms.

Analysis of findings

From the findings, I developed a model of unintended consequences of institutional work. The model, shown in Figure 3, consists of two cycles: Cycle 1 – unintended transgressions of a nascent institution as a result of institutional work to advance the institution and Cycle 2 – unintended transgressions of an established institution as a consequence of institutional work in adherence to the institution. The cycle numbers do not represent a hierarchical or temporal order. These cycles often occur simultaneously, and one necessitates the other. They are founded upon the same mechanism: public conformity to the established institution.

Insert FIGURE 3 about here

Unintended transgressions of a nascent institution

Cycle 1 shows the unintended transgressions of a nascent institution that proponents promote while perpetuating an established institution in which the proponents are embedded. When the proponents attempt to create and maintain a nascent institution, the norm majority is likely to interpret their institutional work in line with the established institution. If they see the proponents' work as flouting this established institution and tainting its adherents, they cannot simply ignore it. Members of the norm majority show rectitude as they engage in maintaining the established institution. Their reaction reproduces the pre-existing institution, not the nascent one. From the perspective of the proponents, however, this unexpectedly contravenes the nascent institution that they originally intended to promote.

In this study, we can find examples of Cycle 1. One obvious example is the interaction between male NAS leaders and the norm majority, upper-class women. When these leaders introduced bird protection by denouncing women in feathered hats, upper-class women considered that this criticism tainted virtuous mothers. In response, those women joined the NAS while demonstrating their conformity to homosocial norms. This led to the participation of plume-decorated bird protectionists in the anti-plumage movement. This result transgressed not only the male leaders' work but also the nascent institution for which they campaigned.

In addition, a more nuanced example of Cycle 1 is the success of junior Audubon classes that reproduced traditional gender roles. Some of the NAS women envisioned their public contribution to bird protection. The proliferation of junior

classes showcased female achievement in the national movement. However, the expansion of women's social domain did not go unnoticed by the norm majority: female teachers. In an environment in which women's 'natural' sphere was their homes (Cott, 1997), these collaborators were already breaching the norms. Further engagement in expanding women's sphere would risk the norm majority's legitimacy in the field of child education. Therefore, the female teachers instead reproduced traditional gender roles in the junior classes. Their response became conflicting with the model of NAS women's venture outside the home, which was backed by Mrs. Sage.

Cycle 1 highlights how individual embeddedness in an established institution can lead to unintended consequences of institutional work. This resonates with the premise of institutional change: 'institutions always exist prior to any attempt by the actors to introduce change, and will therefore shape the process of change' (Burns & Scapens, 2000, p. 11). Although institutional work aiming to advance a nascent institution can be legitimized by the established institution, it is not automatically seen as reproducing the established institution. Instead, it can generate multifarious meanings and necessitate unexpected responses from the public (Lawrence & Dover, 2015). Because the public reaction from the norm majority is in line with the established institution, institutional work to promote the nascent institution is likely to compromise that institution.

Unintended transgressions of an established institution

Cycle 2 shows the unintended transgression of an established institution that members of the norm majority originally want to maintain while reproducing nascent institutions that can potentially conflict with the established institution. The norm

majority’s maintenance work signals that the established institution is not intact (Adut, 2005). For proponents, it becomes risky to promote nascent institutions by tapping into the purportedly eroding institution. To secure social approval and legitimacy for their nascent institutions, these proponents are likely to react. Instead of abandoning the established institution altogether, they continue to reproduce nascent institutions while making their conformity to the established institution obvious. This act further signals the underenforcement of the existing institution. As a result, the proponents’ response is likely to compromise the established institution that originally conditioned and enabled the norm majority’s work.

In this study, an example of Cycle 2 is NAS men’s maintenance work in response to the participation of upper-class women in the NAS. When women’s public conformity to homosocial norms transformed the NAS into a heterosocial organization, the participation of these women was seen as a violation of widely held norms. In response, the male leaders maintained bird protection while publicly calling the women ‘bird mothers’. As a result, women kept joining the NAS. The apparent underenforcement of the norms enabled some women to launch their own conservation projects. Homosocial norms were further transgressed while reproducing the nascent institution of bird protection.

Cycle 2 suggests that proponents’ temporal improvisation (Smets & Jarzabkowski, 2013) can be a form of public conformity. Focusing on conflicts between opposing parties, existing research has documented improvisation or change in each party’s action (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). For instance, when German lawyers are confronted by the traditional English client-service logic, their improvisation not only accommodates this logic but also leads to a hybrid logic to meet a new goal: getting deals done (Smets & Jarzabkowski, 2013). Relatedly, the

literature on unintended consequences highlights that the main reason for an individual changing his or her action is a shift in the individual's 'preference' or 'goal' under the press of events (Portes, 2000). As social actors try to respond to situational contingencies, they reorient themselves to achieve new goals. To fulfil the shifted goal, they change strategies and thereby produce an improvised settlement (Schneiberg & Soule, 2005, p. 152).

In light of the current understanding of improvisation as a reaction to changing situations, Cycle 2 suggests that proponents' improvisation is their demonstration of public conformity in response to the norm majority's work. When their potential allies' maintenance work betrays underenforced norms, the proponents' preference shifts toward overtly supporting the shared norms to maintain their nascent institutions. Otherwise, the nascent institutions and their work are likely to lose the legitimacy drawn from the established institution. Altogether, this improvisation-as-public-conformity approach offers important insights for the institutional analysis of social actors' responses to contingencies.

Discussion

Social mechanism of unintended consequences

In this section, I discuss the main contributions of the model to existing studies on unintended consequences, institutional work and the dualistic model of institutional change. First, the model advances the literature on unintended consequences by highlighting a mechanism of unintended consequences: public conformity to an established institution (Adut, 2005; Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Kuran, 1995). Prior studies on unintended consequences often emphasized individual-level causes and processes. Individuals always make decisions in the face of considerable uncertainty

because they do not have perfect knowledge and information. They tend to incorrectly estimate others' responses at the time of their action, which produces unexpected outcomes that pervert the intent of the action (De Zwart, 2015; Mica, 2015; Portes, 2000). Even if social actors have sufficient knowledge and few cognitive biases, unintended consequences are likely to occur because those individuals have new preferences and change their action to meet their new goals over time (Portes, 2000). Fulfilling the new goals obviously results in something different from what they initially envisaged.

Although the literature acknowledges the importance of social mechanisms (Vernon, 1979), few empirical studies have identified these mechanisms. The literature, of course, recognizes one's action in adherence to a pre-existing institution and its unintended consequences as 'latent functions' (Portes, 2000, p. 9); unintended consequences are actually meant to sustain the established institution (Durkheim, [1897] 1965). However, the latent function argument is largely silent on how action conforming to an existing institution manifests perceived vulnerabilities of that institution and thereby influences individual action-reaction cycles. Relatively little explanation has been given regarding how and why action in accordance with an established institution may end up transgressing that institution.

This research enriches the literature on unintended consequences by focusing on the ways in which a social actor's action rebounds not only on the intent of the action but also on the institution that his or her action is taken in adherence to. When proponents of nascent institutions and the norm majority are embedded in the same established institution, members of the norm majority habitually interpret the proponents' attempts in line with widely held norms (e.g., habitual tendencies; Merton, 1936). Their reaction reproduces the established institution that conditions

subsequent reaction from the proponents with respect to how they show conformity. As a result, the proponents' action unexpectedly challenges nascent institutions, and the public's reaction inadvertently compromises the established institution in which both of them are embedded. In that regard, this study broadens the current literature, and future research would benefit from moving beyond individual-level explanations.

Institutional work and unintended institutional outcomes

This study provides a better understanding of the role of nondisruptive institutional work (e.g., maintenance work) in unintended transgressions of institutions that the work aims to reproduce. To date, the assumption and depiction of knowledgeable actors has hindered the theory's ability to accommodate unexpected ramifications (Giddens, 1984). Socially skilled individuals are believed to have knowledge of existing institutions as well as the social positions and interests of others (Fligstein, 1997). Their knowledge makes them capable both of acting and of justifying the outcomes of their action. Accordingly, unexpected ramifications are often overlooked or retrospectively interpreted as expected.

In developing an alternative model, this study explicates how institutional work that successfully leverages an established institution may end up in conflict with that institution. It offers a useful point of comparison with McGaughey's (2013) analysis of unintended consequences; when social actors 'fail' to effectively deploy a pre-existing established institution (in the form of community-wide memory and tradition) in their institutional work, they unintentionally strengthen that institution (McGaughey, 2013, p. 74).

This study suggests that social actors who successfully deploy an established institution may not strengthen that institution; instead, they may unintentionally

compromise it. Social actors promote nascent institutions by drawing on widely held norms and schemas (Khan et al., 2007). In doing so, their institutional work appeals to the public. At the same time, it invites the norm majority to interpret the work in accordance with widely held norms. If the majority considers the original work to taint norm adherents, such as themselves, then maintaining the established institution becomes their 'immediacy of interest' (Merton, 1936). In that respect, the norm majority's public conformity begins to contravene the institution. More importantly, this signals the underenforced institution that the proponents tap into. When the proponents aim to maintain nascent institutions in accordance with the established institution, their institutional work might instead further compromise the same institution to which everyone apparently conforms.

Overall, this study responds to the recent interest in the unintended consequences of institutional work (Leung, Zietsma, & Peredo, 2014; McGaughey, 2013; Singh & Jayanti, 2013). In particular, the model offers a refined understanding of the reciprocal processes connecting nondisruptive institutional work to the transgressions of institutions. It highlights how institutional work that aims to reproduce institutions precipitates further institutional work, but subsequent action could also compromise those institutions. The revelation of such processes expands the current research on institutional work.

Norm majority and institutional change

The understanding of reciprocal relationships between proponents and the norm majority is important for improving the dualistic model of institutional change (Guérard et al., 2013; Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2006; Schneiberg & Soule, 2005). Inspired by social movement analysis, the dualistic model largely centers on ongoing

conflicts between proponents and opponents of change (Garud, Jain, & Kumaraswamy, 2002; Greenwood et al., 2011; Smets & Jarzabkowski, 2013). However, the emphasis on conflicts between opposing actors often overlooks the role of third parties, such as allies and audiences (Rucht, 2004, p. 213; cf. Bartley, 2007). Given that the conflict-driven model acknowledges the importance of increasing appeal to the public, it is surprising that little research has considered the role of the public in general, and the norm majority in particular, in the process of institutional change.

In that regard, this study adds value to the dualistic model of change by providing compelling evidence that change can be built on interaction with the public. While existing studies on the dualistic model have shown expected outcomes of conflicts, interaction with the norm majority and its unintended consequences remain relatively unexplored. Of course, the focus on this particular set of the public does not imply that existing scholarship has ignored third parties or unintended consequences in relational models (Bartley, 2007). Instead, this study extends the dualistic model of change by taking into account an important yet understudied collectivity in light of public conformity. Especially in the context of social movements, proponents (and opponents) strive to justify their action and obtain resources as they reaffirm society's shared interpretation (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Schneiberg, 2013). In so doing, those who respond to their action are likely to be members of the norm majority. Both nascent and established institutions can be transgressed unintentionally because proponents and the norm majority constantly demonstrate their conformity to the same established institution.

In terms of broader implications, the present study offers important insights for understanding how collective action in accordance with widely held norms invites

the norm majority's responses and thereby creates situations that could lead to unintended consequences. Although social movement researchers have acknowledged unintended consequences of movement participants' action, they have paid more attention to the unexpected results of policy implementation (Giugni, 1998; Soule & King, 2006). The focus on unintended policy outcomes may overemphasize the rationality of collective action while not adequately considering the role of public conformity. In this regard, this study attests to how movement actors' action in adherence to pre-existing norms not only appeals to the general public but also invites responses from the norm majority. By examining how the resonance with established institutions shapes both movement actors' and the norm majority's action, this study enriches the current discussion of unintended consequences of collective action.

Despite its implications for the existing literature, developing a model from a single case in late 19th- and early 20th-century American society may limit its application to contemporary settings. However, we have seen similar cases in which responses from the norm majority end up unintentionally challenging nascent institutions as well as existing ones. For instance, the introduction of new Enfield rifle to the Bengal Native Army was met with unexpected objection from sepoys. These native soldiers saw themselves tainted as they bit purportedly tallow- and lard-greased cartridges (Rao & Dutta, 2012). As the soldiers acted in adherence to established institutions, such as Hinduism and Islam, they challenged this whole new set of practices involving the rifles. Relatedly, modern examples, such as women driving in Saudi Arabia, suggest unintended transgressions of an established institution as a result of the norm majority's reaction in adherence to that institution. Whereas those who criticize women behind the wheel uphold social norms, Saudi women (and men) argue for their role in accordance with the same norms; women should drive

independently because they need to pick up their children from schools and take sick family members to hospitals (Alharbi, 2014). By reaffirming women's role defined by social norms to which everyone apparently conforms, female drivers without male guardians eventually compromise these norms (Chulov, 2017). As these examples suggest, the role of the norm majority in the unintended transgressions of institutions may be common, but it has not come to the attention of institutional scholars. We therefore need more work to understand these phenomena across time and societies.

Although it is not the main argument, the present study also enriches the institutional analysis of change by providing historical insights into contemporary issues, such as gender inequality and class conflict. Whereas recent management studies from institutional perspectives tend to present organizational practices and strategies at face value (cf. Clemens, 1993; Edelman, 1992), this study illuminates an established institution and shows how that institution has historically shaped the manifest value of apparently progressive change. For instance, female participation in traditionally male-only businesses or the appointment of women to senior positions can be viewed as both the establishment of a new institution – gender equality – and the result of institutional work that successfully challenges sexism. Nevertheless, such a depiction may obscure how the institution itself has developed as a result of the observance of patriarchal social norms, even if these norms are no longer ingrained. More importantly, it pays little attention to how the manifest worth of the new institution contributes to perpetuating gender norms in society. Obviously, this article does not make a point of combining critical perspectives with institutional theory (Khan et al., 2007; Munir, 2015). Nevertheless, the incorporation of a historical approach enriches the institutional analysis of contemporary institutions amid gender,

class and racial inequality. Such an approach enhances institutional theory by providing a platform for an in-depth discussion of present-day institutions.

All in all, this study reveals how institutional work entails unintended transgressions of institutions. It makes a number of noteworthy contributions to institutional studies by explicating interaction between proponents of change and the norm majority in light of public conformity. I hope this paper fuels scholarship in this vein.

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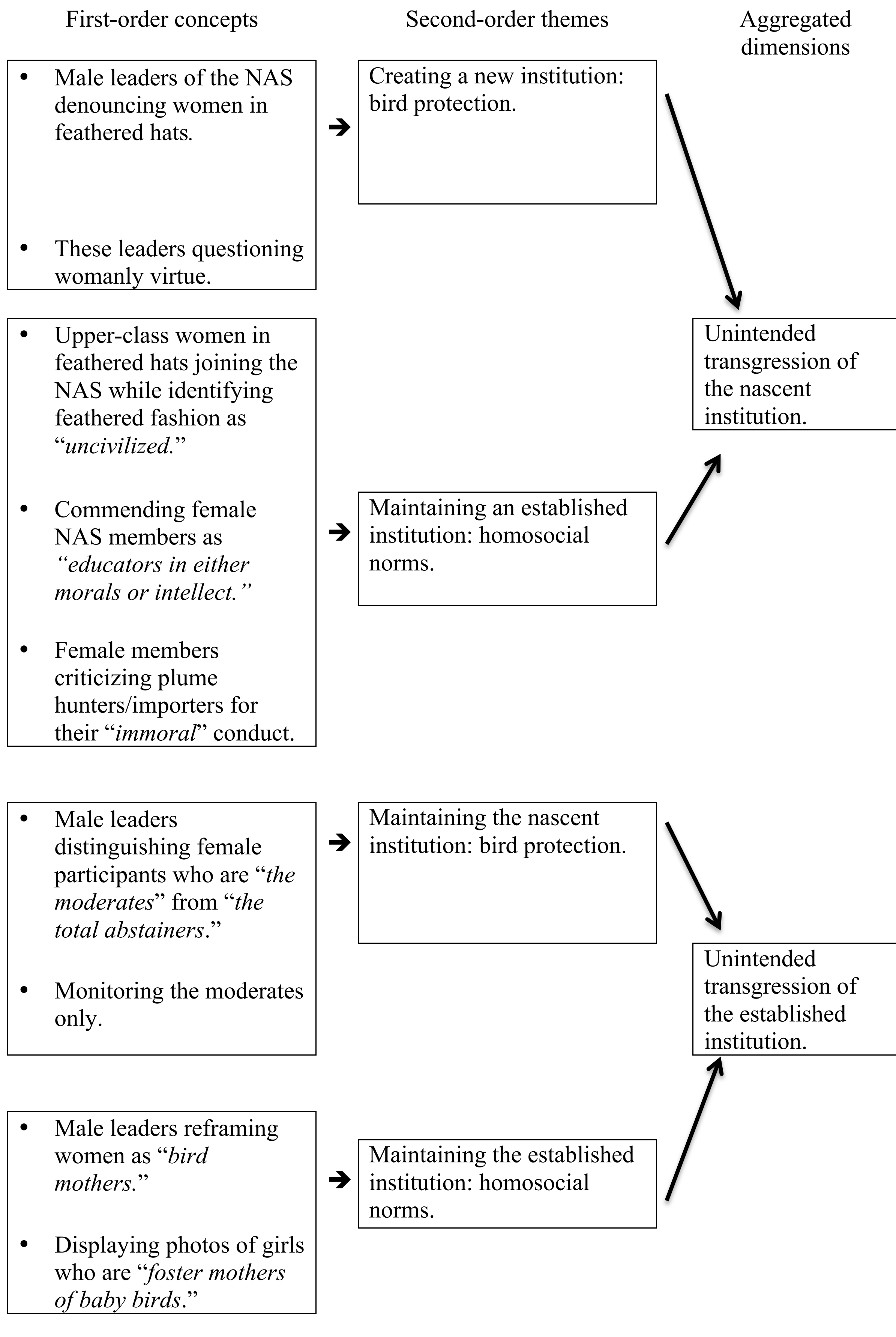
Figure 1. Data Structure.



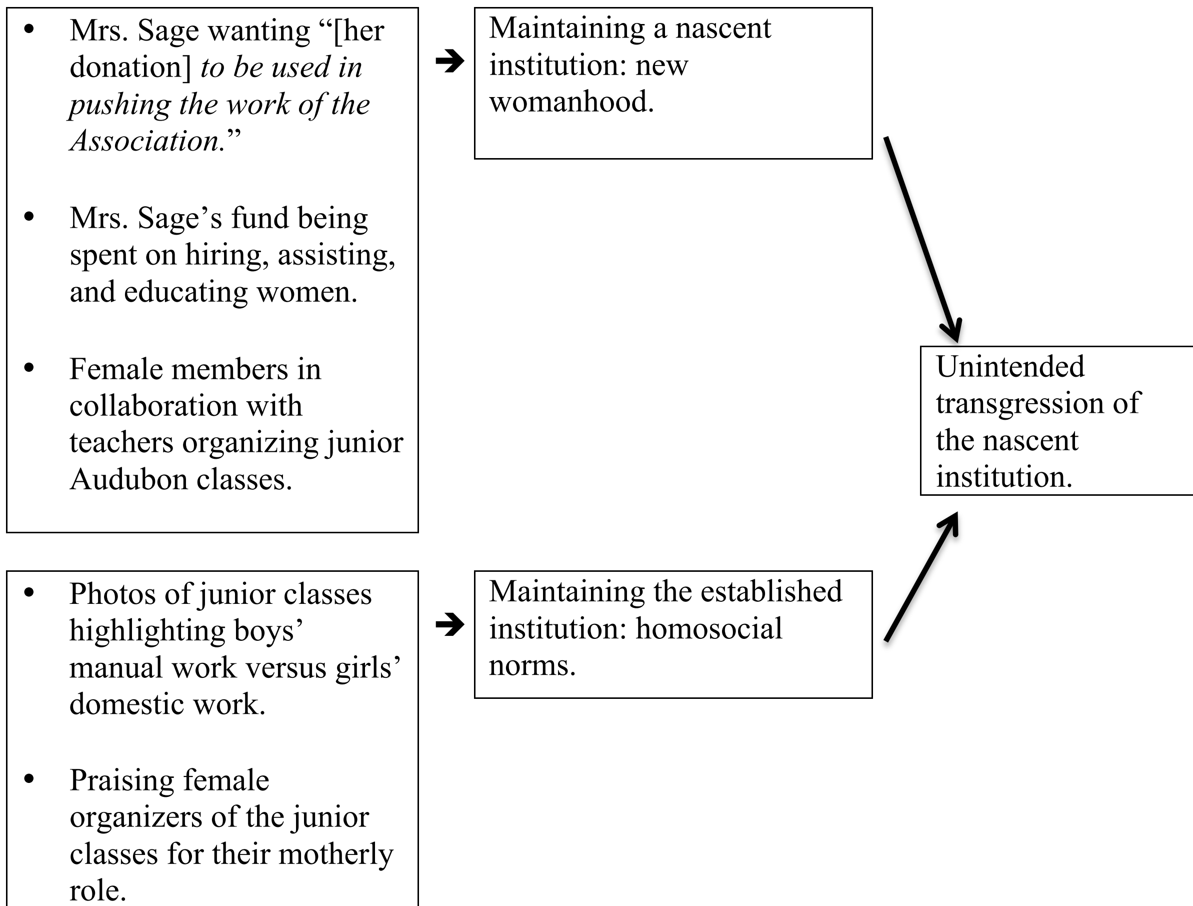

• Mrs. Sage wanting "[her donation] *to be used in pushing the work of the Association.*"
• Mrs. Sage's fund being spent on hiring, assisting, and educating women.
• Female members in collaboration with teachers organizing junior Audubon classes.
Maintaining a nascent institution: new womanhood.
• Photos of junior classes highlighting boys' manual work versus girls' domestic work.
• Praising female organizers of the junior classes for their motherly role.
Maintaining the established institution: homosocial norms.
Unintended transgression of the nascent institution.

Figure 2. A Chain of Institutional Work.

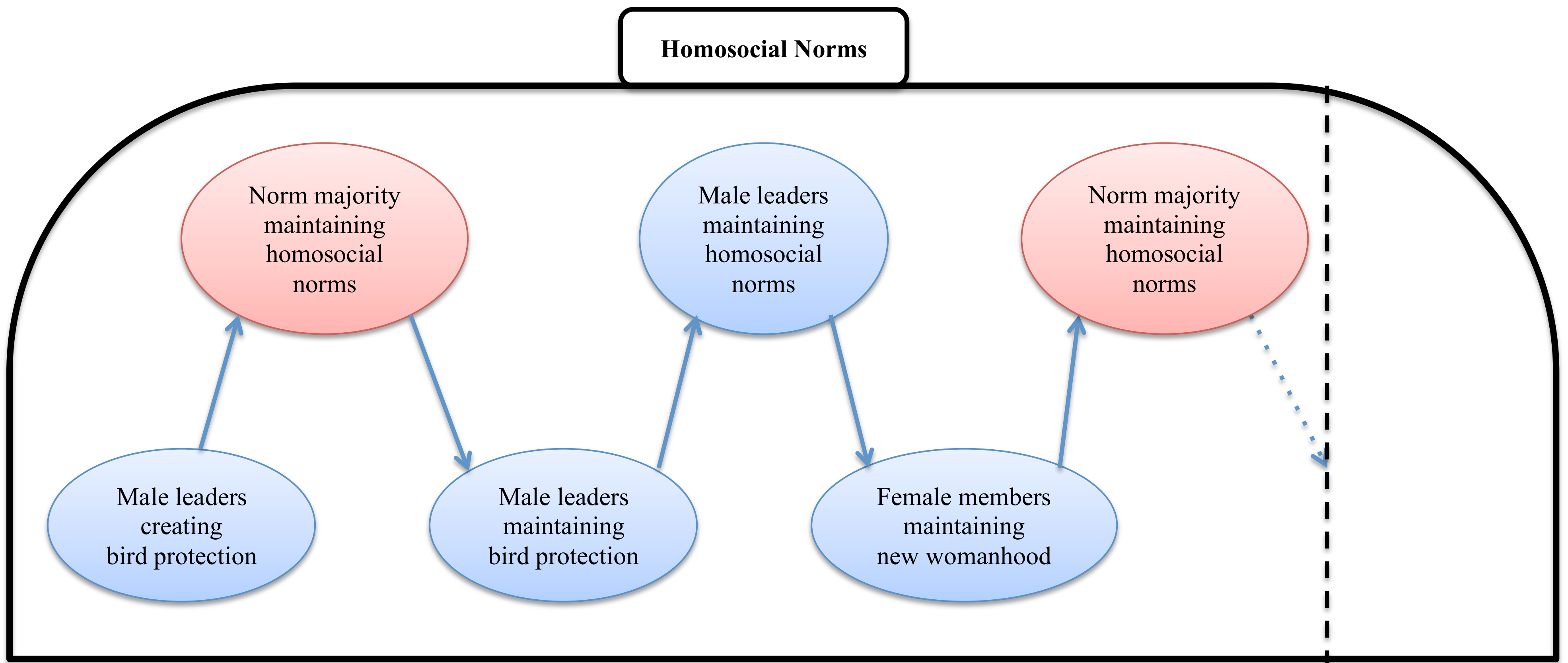


Figure 3. Unintended Consequences of Institutional Work.

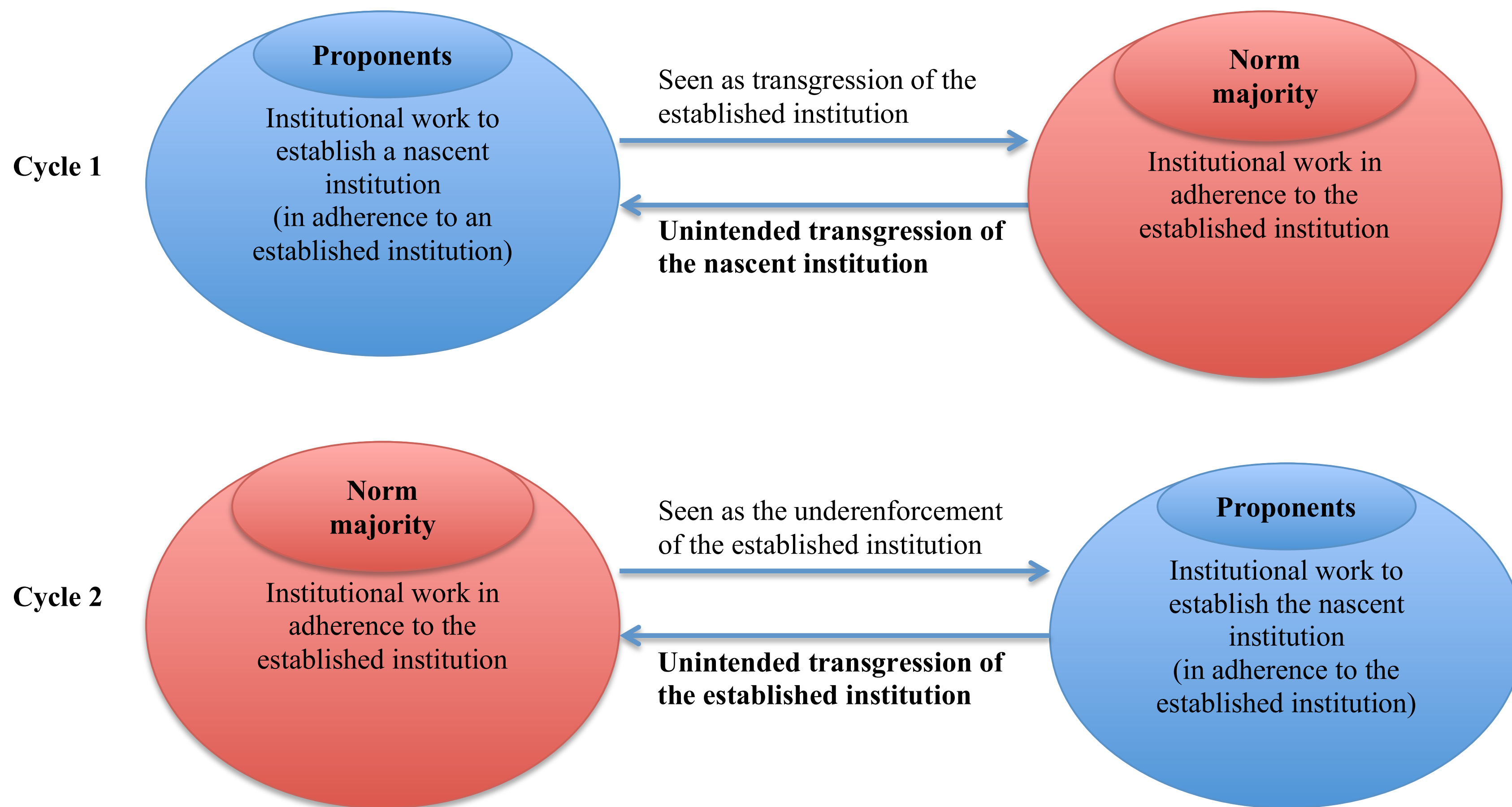


Table 1. Data Supporting Institutional Work.

Institutional Work	Illustrative Data
Male NAS leaders creating bird protection by remaking connections between women's feathered hats and shared normative understandings.	• "We learn from sources that are unfortunately but too reliable, that the Parisian mondaines or demi-mondaines, who dictate the fashions to the women of the civilized world, have decided that feathers are to be de rigeur this winter." (National Audubon Society, 1888, p. 207) • "… There is an element of savagery in the use of birds for personal decoration, which is in grotesque contrast with our boasts of civilization.... If the Audubon Society can teach men, and especially women, to think on this subject, half of the battle will have been won." (National Audubon Society, 1888, p. 198)
Upper-class women maintaining homosocial norms by valorizing women as civilizers and moral preachers.	• "…Is it owed to the law or to the lady? Let us credit it to the law *and* the lady, and hope that the two are standing with locked hands, as they exchange New Year's greetings and form a twentieth century alliance in the cause of Bird Protection, as they have so often done in other things that elevate the race." [emphasis added] (The National Association of Audubon Societies, 1901, p. 41)
Male leaders maintaining bird protection by policing female members.	• "…the fashions for the fall and winter of 1902 would demand an increased use of aigrettes, ... women [moderates] had almost universally offered as an excuse for wearing aigrettes that they were ignorant of the fact that the grossest cruelty was used in securing these plumes…" (The National Association of Audubon Societies, 1902, p. 107)
Male leaders maintaining homosocial norms by valorizing women as mothers.	• "The woman who teaches her children humanity and to keep their fingers out of nests, and banishes forbidden plumes from her head-gear…" (The National Association of Audubon Societies, 1904, p. 174) • "Let every woman who is still willing to wear a Heron's plume have a personal appeal made to her better nature…Spread this leaflet, with its appeal to motherhood, broadcast over the country…" (The National Association of Audubon Societies, 1904, p. 35)
Female participants maintaining new	• "The contributions of Mrs. Russell Sage to this Association, for its work in the southern states, which during the past year has amounted to $5,500, has [sic]

womanhood by embedding women's engagement in the public movement.	made it possible to employ four field agents, and conduct a large amount of other work in the southern states of late. Miss Katharine H. Stuart, of Virginia, has been constantly engaged in lecturing and writing on bird protection and the work of the Audubon Society...” (The National Association of Audubon Societies, 1911, p. 60)
Female collaborators maintaining homosocial norms by routinizing traditional gender roles in the public movement.	• “…[at West North Street School] During the spring vacation, Wren and Bluebird houses to the number of one hundred and thirty were placed in yards adjoining the homes of the members. These houses had been built by the older boys, each one making two, so that the girls also might enjoy the society of bird families near their homes…” (The National Association of Audubon Societies, 1915, p. 321) • “This spring, the Maywood Twentieth Century Club offered prizes to school children for the best three essays on birds written by girls and for the best three nesting-boxes made by boys. The contest was a great success.” (The National Association of Audubon Societies, 1918, p. 99)