MEANING AT THE SOURCE: THE DYNAMICS OF FIELD FORMATION IN INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

ESTHER LEIBEL[1]
Boston University Questrom School of Business

TIM HALLETT
Indiana University Bloomington

BETH A. BECHKY
NYU Stern School of Business

Organizational fields are a central construct in institutional theory and the notion of shared meaning is integral to the definition of "field." In this review, we discuss how institutional scholars have examined discourse, rhetoric, and framing as mechanisms through which meanings form, change, and coalesce in institutional fields. We assess the important contributions of this literature, but we also argue that what scholars identify as discourse, rhetoric, and frames are the residues or echoes of prior social interactions. When scholars miss the opportunity to examine interactions as a key mechanism and source of these meanings, a fundamental dynamic of fields becomes obscured and the accounts become, ironically, static. A focus on interactions enables researchers to observe how institutional fields are understood and tethered to local activity, as actors layer their multiple meanings in ways that may result in unexpected outcomes. As a way to incorporate discourse, rhetoric, and frames into a dynamic approach that features social interaction as an important source of meaning, we examine possibilities evident in the growing line of research on "inhabited institutions," and we chart productive avenues for future research on the dynamics of fields.

INTRODUCTION

Organizational fields—those organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983: 148)—are a fundamental construct in institutional theory. An early wave of empirical research in this area focused on testing the mechanisms leading to adoption of practices and field-level isomorphism (Davis & Greve, 1997; DiMaggio, 1991; Fligstein, 1990; Leblebici, Salancik, Copay & King, 1991; Tolbert & Zucker, 1983), which resulted in a neglect of issues of agency, politics, and change (Brint & Karabel, 1991; DiMaggio, 1988, 1995; Greenwood & Hinings, 1996; Hirsch & Lounsbury, 1997; Perrow, 1986). What followed in the late 1990s was a series of studies "that looked not at homogeneity but at variation and change among organizations within a field as signs of institutional processes" (Wooten & Hoffman, 2008:

135). This subsequent wave of research shifted the focus from isomorphic processes to change, agency, and institutional pluralism (Kraatz & Block, 2008). Underlying these processes is a conception of fields as "relational spaces" where individuals and organizations interact with one another to develop collective understandings on issues that are important for organizational and field-level action (Wooten & Hoffman, 2008).

Along with that of organizational field, the notion of meaning—what is signified in institutional structures and practices (Zilber, 2008: 152)—has been central to institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Zucker, 1977). Meanings suffuse the arenas in which institutional struggles occur (Zilber, 2002). Nevertheless, most of the empirical work on institutions has focused on the diffusion of structures and practices, viewed as concrete manifestations of meanings (Zilber, 2008). In this way, meaning is treated as a relatively stable, external cultural structure. This focus limits our knowledge of the dynamics of field formation, especially how micro processes of meaning making

and interpretation contribute to the spread and change of institutional practices (Dobbin, 1994; Friedland & Alford, 1991; Hasselbladh & Kallinikos, 2000). Additional attention to the mechanisms of meaning making as they develop via interactions among organizational actors and other individuals in a field would highlight "the particular, the contextual, the political, and the ongoing processes involved in institutionalization" (Zilber, 2008: 151).

We argue that one way to understand organizational fields "as sites where problems of organizing are debated among disparate actors" (Wooten & Hoffman, 2008: 142), is by paying attention to *the mechanisms that create meaning in institutional fields.* To this end, we review three main ways in which institutional scholars have attended to the role of meaning in field formation: discourse, rhetoric, and framing. In our examination, we draw out the insights that each perspective on meaning provides into institutional field formation. We also note their limitations when they gloss the social interactions that occur between institutional actors. Specifically, we argue that institutional scholars can benefit by going more directly to social interactions as a key mechanism and source of meanings. Finally, we provide recommendations on how to conduct future research on meaning making in field construction.

To make our case, we begin by reviewing what the discourse, rhetoric, and framing literature finds specifically vis-à-vis meaning and field formation. Discourse approaches attend to how individuals and organizations employ texts to organize information regarding new institutions and practices. Rhetoric perspectives focus on the types of arguments used by different constituencies to motivate or oppose change. Finally, frames facilitate meaning making by offering "schemata of interpretation" (Goffman, 1974: 21) of field-level structures and practices. Although literature on discourse, rhetoric, and frames highlights mechanisms of meaning making that presume interactions among field actors, it often overlooks the social interactions from which meanings originate, creating static images of meaning making. We suggest that inhabited institutionalism, with its strong focus on interactions, is particularly well suited to provide insights into the mechanisms for meaning formation that are obscured without tangible accounts of people doing things together. These interactions reveal how broader institutional rationales are tethered to local understandings. Such tethered understandings partially reflect the fields in which they occur, but also have a generative role in those very fields.

By examining interactions among different and often divergent groups of people in organizational fields, inhabited institutionalism provides a means to examine not only the coalescence and convergence of meanings but also pluralism in meanings and ongoing struggles over meaning—contested states that create layering and further possibilities for changes in the field. Finally, we reflect on how inhabited institutionalism and linguistic approaches such as discourse, rhetoric, and framing may be combined to enrich the study of field formation. On the one hand, inhabited institutionalism captures intraorganizational and interorganizational interactions as they occur within fields. On the other hand, the study of discourse, rhetoric, and frames can help to capture broader dynamics, unveiling processes of field-level meaning making.

ORGANIZATIONAL FIELDS AND MEANING MAKING

Methodology and Spirit of the Review

We base our analysis on a review of more than 60 papers that adopt a discourse, rhetoric, or framing perspective on meaning formation in fields (Appendix A, available online). We selected the papers through multiple stages. First, we ran a search on the Web of Science database for the following keywords: "discours*," "rhetor*," or "fram*," along with "field*", or "market*". Following Zietsma, Groenewegen, Logue, and Hinings (2017), we selected 1983 as the starting point, the year in which DiMaggio and Powell introduced the term "field," and ended the search in October 2016. The search included the following journals: *Academy of Management Annals, Academy of Management Journal, Academy of Management Review, Administrative Science Quarterly, Organization, Organization Science*, *Organization Studies, American Journal of Sociology*, *American Sociological Review, Journal of Management Studies, Poetics, and Qualitative Research*. From this first list, which contained close to 600 articles, we selected 173 papers in which the abstract suggested an emphasis on meaning making in fields, and skimmed all of them. Because our understanding of fields envisions them as institutionally recognized interactional spaces where diverse sets of actors engage in meaning making (Wooten & Hoffman, 2008), we excluded papers on the identity and meaning making of professions (a related but separate stream of literature that focuses on professional fields, in which the diversity of

actors is less pronounced). Given our interest in meaning making, we also excluded papers that did not directly speak to this concern.

Given these criteria, our search yielded a large pool of qualitative papers. The handful of quantitative papers were concerned with the conditions that facilitated the diffusion or abandonment of a given organizational form or practice (e.g., Davis et al., 1994; Helms, Oliver, & Webb, 2012) rather than with actual processes of meaning formation in fields. As such, we did not include them in our analysis. Our final sample includes 52 qualitative papers, five mixed methods papers, and four theory papers (See Appendix A1).

This sample includes some papers that simultaneously employ both discourse and frames (Appelrouth, 2003; Djelic, 2013), discourse and rhetoric (Gherardi & Perrotta 2011; Özen & Berkman, 2007), or rhetoric and frames (Hirsch & Soucey, 2006). In these instances, and to create clarity in our classifications, we focused on the primary mechanism that generated meaning in the field. For example, if meanings were generated largely through rhetorical strategies, we classified the paper as a rhetoric paper, even if the authors also employed discourse or narrative analysis. Of the 61 papers included in Appendix A, 23 adopt a primarily discursive perspective, 12 focus on rhetoric, and 20 employ frames. In addition, six other papers use other perspectives, such as logics, vocabulary, practices, and inhabited institutions.

Overview of Discourse, Rhetoric, and Framing Approaches

To explore the meanings that accompany the emergence and change of fields, institutional scholars have mainly relied on linguistic approaches such as discourse, rhetoric, and frames. Table 1 provides an overview of these three linguistic approaches in relation to meaning making, highlighting the types of data employed, the general conceptualization of meaning, and the mechanisms for meaning making discussed in the literatures on discourse, rhetoric, and frames.

Discourse analysis attends to the relationships among texts, discourse, action, and institutionalization processes (Phillips, Lawrence, & Hardy, 2004: 637). Texts can take a multiplicity of forms, such as "written documents, verbal reports, artwork, spoken words, pictures, symbols, buildings, and other artifacts" (Phillips et al., 2004: 636). According to this framework, institutions are socially constructed through discourses, which in turn constrain certain types of actions whereas encouraging others (Fairclough, 1995). In addition, actors can influence discourses through the production and dissemination of texts (Fairclough, 1992), thereby shaping institutions. This vast body of literature has used a variety of approaches—ranging from the semantic and narrative analysis of texts, to ethnographic methods, to the study of broader societal discourses—to explore how the production and consumption of texts affects meaning making and institutionalization processes (Phillips et al., 2004).

Rhetorical approaches adopt a stronger agentic perspective compared with discourse analysis because they assume a direct causal relationship between the use of language and the interests of the user (Suddaby, 2010). Organizations and actors employ rhetoric and rhetorical strategies to champion institutional change (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009), including new organizational forms (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005), policies (Brown, Ainsworth, & Grant, 2012), and practices (Huault & Rainelli-Le Montagner, 2009), or to exert resistance to change (Gherardi & Perrotta, 2011). Similar to discourse, rhetoric is conveyed through written and spoken words, as well as through images and artifacts.

Of the three approaches, framing is the one that is most directly concerned with processes of meaning formation, as it explicitly addresses meaning making at the micro-, meso-, and macrolevels (Cornelissen & Werner, 2014). At a microlevel, research on frames has focused on the effects framing has on individual sense-making that occurs through the "priming and activation of knowledge schemas" (Cornelissen & Werner, 2014: 183). The meso literature has explored the persuasive power of framing strategies employed by social movements (Benford & Snow, 2000), as well as the cognitive frames that drive organizational decision-making (Kaplan, 2008). Finally, framing research at the macro level has investigated how field-level frames and framing contribute to the diffusion of new ideas and practices (Ansari, Fiss, & Zajac, 2010; Rao, Monin, & Durand, 2003), as well as to the formation of new markets (Weber et al., 2008). More so than discourse or rhetoric, the framing literature has also focused its attention on struggles over meaning in the form of "framing contests" (Kaplan, 2008).

Appendix A organizes the literature on discourse, rhetoric, and frames in relation to meaning making. As we reviewed this literature, we began to see a tension: although discourse, rhetoric, and frames are mechanisms for the production of meaning, at times the research presented the material in a way

TABLE 1
Summary of the Discourse, Rhetoric, and Frames Perspectives in Relation to Meaning Making

Type of Approach	General Features in Relation to Meaning Making	Types of Data	General Conceptualization of Meaning	Mechanisms for Meaning Making	Exemplar Studies
Discourse	Attends to how individuals and organizations employ texts to organize information regarding new institutions and practices. Institutions are socially constructed through discourses, which in turn constrain action. In addition, actors can influence discourses through the production and dissemination of texts	Mostly secondary archival data: newspaper articles and critics' reviews. Some use of primary archival data: editorial cartoons, print ads, government reports, policy documents hearing transcripts, artifacts. Limited use of multiple archival sources, interviews and observations	Shared understanding, which emerges from texts that organize field-level concepts	Mostly cognitive and outcome oriented. Discourses organize the knowledge around subjects, objects, and their relationships. Discursive strategies such as analogies and metaphors activate cognitive processes of legitimation and new institutional design	Hardy and Phillips (1999), Hardy and Maguire (2010), Lawrence and Phillips (2004), Munir and Phillips (2005), Maguire and Hardy (2006, 2009), Zilber (2007, 2011).
Rhetoric	Focuses on the types of arguments used by different constituencies to motivate or oppose change. This approach assumes a direct causal relationship between the use of language and the interests of the user	Mostly primary archival data: commission hearings, inquiry reports, print ads, annual reports, speeches, and media releases. Observations and interviews are often employed as the main data source rather than a complement to archival records	Shared understanding, which is the result of persuasive language	Outcome oriented. Rational, emotional, and moral appeals contained in texts, images, or verbal communications activate cognitive processes that construct and shift meanings. Rational arguments clarify the reasons for change, whereas moral and emotional justifications increase the sense of urgency	Gherardi and Perrotta (2011), Heracleous and Barrett (2001), Oakes, Townley, and Cooper (1998), Suddaby and Greenwood (2005), Vaara and Tienar (2008)
Frames	Presents frames as schemata of interpretation of field-level structures and practices at the micro, meso, and macro levels. Attends to actors' struggles over meaning	Primary archival data: reports, pamphlets, speeches, congressional hearings, meeting minutes, and newsletters, also combined with secondary archival sources (newspapers). More studies combine archival data with interviews and observations, or are based on observations	Negotiated understanding, the result of dynamic and sometimes adversarial processes	Process oriented. Negotiation, mediation, and other forms of interaction facilitate the emergence of hybrid logics, common means–end frames, and field frames. Framing contests may lead to the prevalence of a frame over the others or be resolved through negotiations that result in compromises, and the creation of common sets of meanings	Ansari, Wijen, and Gray (2013), Granqvist and Laurila (2011), Laegreid and Serigstad (2006), Weber, Heinze, and DeSoucey (2008)

that suggested that focal texts seemed to do the work of meaning production. In other words, we observed the absence of processes of interactions conducive to dynamic and local understandings. When this occurred, the approaches became far more static than one might expect, given that discourse, rhetoric, and framing are all inherently interactional. Thus, one of our goals in this review is to explore and advance interactional perspectives on meaning making in fields, vis-à-vis the research on discourse, rhetoric, and frames. To understand the current state of the literature on meanings and fields, for each paper, we reviewed and assessed the mechanisms for meaning formation and the degree to which these mechanisms took into account interactions. This included identifying not only mechanisms for meaning formation, but relating these mechanisms to the data and methods employed in the analysis. In addition, we unpacked how the authors conceptualized "meaning"—as shared understandings, more contested and negotiated understandings, or the attributions made by dominant actors. Finally, we analyzed the extent to which meaning making incorporated dynamic processes, including changes in historic and material context, audience participation, and explicit interaction among field actors.

Mechanisms for Meaning Formation and Sources of Data

Discourse. Our review revealed that discourses influence the formation of field-level meanings by advancing the perspectives of dominant actors and coalitions, and by facilitating the local translation of macrosocietal conversations around a broad set of issues ranging from refugee resettlement (Hardy & Phillips, 1999) to commercial whale watching (Lawrence & Phillips, 2004). Although the discursive processes can vary, as we will see, the mechanisms involved are primarily cognitive.

In terms of content, the range of texts analyzed by discourse scholars is rather broad. Although newspaper articles and critics' reviews have been a dominant source of data (Hartz & Steger, 2010; Glynn & Lounsbury, 2005; McDonnell & Tepper, 2014; van Bommel & Spicer, 2011) scholars of discourse have relied on a set of additional archival sources, including editorial cartoons (Hardy & Phillips, 1999), advertisements (Munir & Phillips, 2005), policy documents (Garland & Darcy, 2009; Maguire & Hardy, 2006), government reports, hearing transcripts, (Maguire, & Hardy, 2009), and even artifacts (Jones, Maoret, Massa, & Svejenova, 2012). We found

only a limited number of studies (Prasad, Prasad, & Baker, 2016; Wright & Zammuto, 2013) which made use of multiple archival sources, or integrated text analysis with interviews and observations (Hardy & Maguire, 2010; Zilber, 2007, 2011).

Discourse analysis has been used to link text production with meaning making, especially in regard to institutional entrepreneurship (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005; Battilana et al., 2009). As Hardy and Maguire (2008: 205) note, a growing body of work in institutional entrepreneurship "examines interpretation and explains institutional change with reference to complex, ongoing struggles over meaning among numerous actors." In field formation, actors have stakes in particular meanings and attempt to assert their preferred ones (Grant & Hardy, 2004). Discourses are a tool that they use to convey their beliefs and advance their agenda, ultimately enacting their meanings in a field. Alternative discourses contribute to different constructions of reality, which in turn support and legitimize different types of practices.

Along these lines, discursive approaches have been employed to examine how dominant actors and coalitions, including corporate and industry leaders (Munir & Phillips, 2005; Lavie & Dhoest, 2015; Prasad et al., 2016), governments, social movements (Etzion & Ferraro, 2010; van Bommel & Spicer, 2011), and journalists or critics (Glynn & Lounsbury, 2005; Hartz & Steger, 2010; McDonnell & Tepper, 2014), advance their viewpoints in a field. In this work, the media is viewed not only as a carrier of messages and meanings but also as a legitimizing force that has the ability to shape public discourses by creating original content, thus promoting the acceptance of new fields and practices. For example, in their study of change in the field of classical music, Glynn and Lounsbury (2005: 1032) found that "[media] critics act as key meaningmakers in fields." Through their reviews, critics promoted a shift from an aesthetic logic to a market logic.

Although the particular ways in which discourses create meanings vary, the mechanisms suggested by most authors are cognitive ones. Discourses organize the knowledge around subjects, objects, and their relationships (Caruana & Crane, 2008), making sense of the world for its inhabitants (Phillips et al., 2004). In particular, discursive strategies such as analogies (Etzion & Ferraro, 2010), metaphors (McDonnell & Tepper, 2014), or the use of "floating signifiers" (van Bommel & Spicer, 2011) activate cognitive processes of legitimation and new institutional design. Emergence or shift of meanings can be influenced by broader cultural frameworks and societal discourses

(Glynn & Lounsbury, 2005; Hardy, & Phillips, 1999; Hartz & Steger, 2010), by their local translation (Lawrence and Phillips, 2004; Prasad et al., 2016; Wright & Zammuto, 2013; Zilber, 2006), or through the negotiation between different actors' logics and positions on issues (Jones et al., 2012; Maguire & Hardy, 2009).

Rhetoric. Studies of rhetoric in fields explore direct linkages between persuasive language and strategic outcomes, such as the legitimation of a practice, or institutional change. In these studies, actors are presented as deliberately choosing cognitive as well as emotional mechanisms to alter meanings in fields. For example, institutional entrepreneurs use rhetorical strategies, such as analogies, stories, institutional vocabularies, and change scenarios, to communicate their vision for change and to mobilize action (Battilana, et al., 2009).

Similar to the discourse literature, the rhetoric studies we reviewed employed a range of archival sources. However, rather than focusing on secondary data such as newspaper articles or critics' reviews, rhetoric studies favor primary data such as commission hearings (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005), inquiry reports (Brown et al., 2012; Herepath & Kitchener, 2016), print ads (Garland, Huising, & Struben, 2013), annual reports, speeches, and media releases (Spicer & Fleming, 2007). Observations and interviews are employed more frequently than in discourse studies and are often the main data source rather than a complement to archival records (Almeling, 2007; Gherardi & Perrotta, 2011; Huault & Rainelli-Le Montagner, 2009; Özen & Berkman, 2007; Swan, Bresnen, Robertson, Newell, & Dopson, 2010; Symon, Buehring, Johnson, & Cassell, 2008).

As with the research on discourse, cognitive mechanisms also have a large role in rhetorical studies. For example, in a paper on the emergence of multidisciplinary partnerships among the Big Five, Suddaby and Greenwood (2005) argue that rhetorical strategies combine two elements: institutional vocabularies and theorizations of change. Institutional vocabularies—words, expressions, and meanings that reflect specific means of interpreting reality (Ford & Ford, 1994)—legitimize new practices by situating them in a particular logic. On the other hand, theorizations of change are linguistic devices by which actors provide "a compelling scenario of change" (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005: 60).

One distinctive feature of rhetorical analysis, compared with discourse or framing, is that along with rational arguments, scholars describe how actors employ reasoning that appeals to emotions and morality (Green, 2004). The Classic Greek philosopher Aristotle (1991) named these three different rhetorical justifications logos (appeal to rationality), pathos (appeal to emotions), and ethos (appeal to morality). The strategic use of multiple rhetorics around an issue triggers the formation of different meanings. These meanings may be combined and activated to elicit shifts in the existing field logic. For example, Brown et al. (2012) analyze the use of logos, ethos, and pathos in shifting the dominant logic in the field of Australian nursing homes from "joint care" of young disabled and the elderly to "age appropriate care." Similarly, Özen and Berkman (2007) look at the rhetorical strategies employed by Turkish managers and professionals who attempted to locally translate and legitimize the practice of total quality management (TQM). For instance, the moral legitimacy of TQM was increased by presenting it as "the 'modern' management philosophy" (Özen & Berkman, 2007: 836). Rhetorical appeals can also operate through visual strategies. For instance, Toyota's print ads of the hybrid car Prius avoided images of people driving to prevent negative association between the act of driving and its adverse effects on the environment (Garland et al., 2013).

Overall, rhetorical studies investigate how rational, emotional, and moral appeals contained in texts, images, or verbal communications construct and shift meanings by making change appear compelling (Herepath & Kitchener, 2016; Hirsch & Soucey, 2006; Symon et al., 2008) and by encouraging actors to use cognitive processes such as imagination (Garland, et al., 2013). Rational arguments may be used to clarify the reasons for change and make it more comprehensible, whereas moral and emotional justifications increase the sense of urgency. These cognitive processes are triggered by institutional vocabularies that invoke specific institutional logics (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005; Swan et al., 2010) or cultural norms (Almeling, 2007; Brown et al., 2012). A small subset of the studies we analyzed also pay attention to the use of rhetoric in support of situated understandings of practices (Gherardi & Perrotta, 2011) or to resolve contradictions and ambiguities (Huault & Rainelli-Le Montagner, 2009).

Frames. Finally, framing is a key mechanism of interpretation and meaning making in field formation, which initially emerged from studies of social movements (Benford & Snow, 2000). Social movements have been linked to institutional change and new field formation because they often involve "the introduction of new types of actors and interests, new repertoires of actions, and new kinds of

structural arrangements" (Dacin, Goodstein & Scott, 2002: 55). Schneiberg and Lounsbury (2008) draw a parallel between social movements and institutional entrepreneurship, as both literatures emphasize agency, deliberate or strategic action, and self-conscious mobilization around alternatives. Researchers in both streams identify framing as one of the critical processes for change, thus suggesting a central role of meanings in the formation of new fields, markets, movements, or organizational forms.

In terms of data sources, framing research uses primary archival data such as reports, pamphlets, speeches, congressional hearings, meeting minutes, and newsletters (Djelic, 2013; Granqvist & Laurila, 2011), secondary archival sources such as newspapers (Appelrouth, 2003; Johnston & Baumann, 2007; Meyer & Hollerer, 2010), or a combination of the two (Fiss & Hirsch, 2005; Granqvist & Laurila, 2011; Lounsbury, Ventresca, & Hirsch, 2003). Because of their focus on negotiations and interactions, more studies in this perspective, as compared with discourse and rhetoric studies, combine archival data with interviews and observations (Ansari, Wijen, & Gray, 2013; Borum, 2004; Guérard, Bode, & Gustafsson, 2013; Khaire, 2014; Laegreid & Serigstad, 2006) or are based on observations (Kaplan, 2008).

As with studies of rhetoric and discourse, framing research has examined how dominant field actors, including media and critics (Johnston & Baumann, 2007), entrepreneurs (Khaire, 2014), and social movements (Weber et al., 2008) construct meanings within a field, by offering "schemata of interpretation" (Goffman, 1974: 21) that help actors decide which practices and structures are legitimate (Lounsbury et al., 2003). However, compared with scholars of discourse and rhetoric, scholars of frames tend to do more to examine both the coalescence and contestation of different meanings within a field. The framing activities of different field actors embed meanings in different cultural contexts. When actors use different schemata, new signification processes can lead to heterogeneity in meanings within the same field (Appelrouth, 2003; Djelic, 2013; Meyer & Hollerer, 2010).

The mechanisms of meaning formation in the frames literature emphasize negotiation, mediation, and other forms of interaction that facilitate the emergence of hybrid logics (Ansari et al., 2013), common means-end frames (Borum, 2004), and field frames (Lounsbury et al., 2003). Framing studies have attended to the "framing contests" (Kaplan, 2008) between actors carrying opposing meanings.

These contests typically lead to the prevalence of a frame over the others (Guérard et al., 2013) but can also be resolved through negotiations that result in compromises (Granqvist & Laurila, 2011; Mora, 2006; Reinecke & Ansari, 2016; Slager, Gond, & Moon, 2012) or the creation of common sets of meanings (Ansari et al., 2013).

The examples above demonstrate that the discourse, rhetoric, and framing literatures employ different types of data and propose different mechanisms for meaning formation. Discourse scholars make use of secondary archival sources such as newspaper articles or critics reviews to show how texts produced by dominant actors facilitate meaning making by organizing knowledge and activating cognitive processes of legitimation and institutional design. Rhetoric studies favor primary archival data such as speeches, congressional hearings, inquiry reports, or print ads to study how field actors try to alter meaning using rational, moral, or emotional arguments. Finally, scholars of framing combine archival sources and observations to show how different schemata of interpretation guide actors during the negotiation of field-level meaning.

CHARACTERIZATIONS OF MEANING IN DISCOURSE, RHETORIC, AND FRAMING STUDIES

The various mechanisms evident in the discourse, rhetoric, and framing literatures entail somewhat different notions of meaning. Hence, another aim of our review is to understand how the authors characterize meaning in fields. We find that the papers conceptualized meaning in four general ways: as the attributions of dominant field actors (Appelrouth, 2003; Caruana & Crane, 2008; Herepath & Kitchener, 2016); as shared understanding (Etzion & Ferraro, 2010; Garland et al., 2013; Reinecke & Ansari, 2016); as contested meanings across constituencies (Zilber, 2011; Huault & Rainelli-Le Montagner, 2009; Fiss & Hirsch, 2005); as more personal or situated understandings originating from interactions (Gherardi & Perrotta, 2011; Gray, Purdy, & Ansari, 2015; Zilber, 2007). Most of the discourse and rhetoric papers are outcome oriented and tend to conceptualize meaning as shared understanding. Discourses organize concepts to promote the institutionalization and legitimacy of fields and practices, whereas rhetoric seeks to elicit emotional or rational responses in the audience to support a given position. Researchers of both discourse and rhetoric collect and analyze the texts involved in institutional change, but end up

missing a lot of the actual processes involved. In contrast, framing research tends to be more process oriented and views meanings as negotiated understanding. With their focus on political action, framing studies get closer to ongoing interactions and capture more meaning making processes, compared to outcome-oriented discourse and rhetoric.

The emphasis on shared understanding in the discursive literature is not surprising, given that Phillips et al. (2004) proposed the framework as a means to investigate the processes underlying institutionalization. Discourse analysis has proven useful for exploring how texts can articulate and disseminate new understandings, attitudes, and beliefs about the field (Grodal & Granqvist, 2014). For example, Munir and Phillips (2005) show how Kodak used images and texts of its ads to shift the shared "meaning" of photography from a specialized activity to part of everyday life. Using a similar approach, Lawrence and Phillips (2004) explain how meanings formed in the new field of commercial whale watching as institutional entrepreneurs interacted with other actors and combined macro-level discourses with local understandings.

Similar to discourse, rhetorical approaches emphasize the use of language to legitimize new organizational forms, practices, and institutional change (Green, Babb, & Alpaslan, 2008; Heracleous & Barrett, 2001; Oakes, Townley, & Cooper, 1998; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005; Vaara & Tienar, 2008). However, rhetorical studies tend to be more agentic and purposive, and conceptualize shared understanding as the result of persuasive acts. Rhetoric can also be used as a political tool to resist change in an existing field. For example, actors can employ rhetoric to construct alternative meanings by theorizing compelling scenarios of change (Symon et al. 2008), or by offering alternative meanings in support of their situated understandings of practices (Gherardi & Perrotta 2011). However, for the most part, the coexistence of multiple meanings in a field is seen as temporary. Rhetorical arguments are viewed as a means for achieving convergence on contested issues, and meaning is conceptualized as shared understanding.

Thus, although rhetorical approaches acknowledge contestation, they often come to focus on the rational, emotional, and moral techniques that specific central actors use to advance a position. In doing so, these studies tend to overlook both the multiplicity of perspectives and the interactions among the proponents of different meanings. For instance, in Herepath and Kitchener's (2016) study of six UK

Government inquiry reports that looked at major breaches of the medical practice in the English National Health Services, the authors conceptualize meaning only in terms of what is intended by the dominant actor, the government. The analysis of the reports identifies the meanings that the government constructed around each scandal, but not the perspectives of the other actors involved.

In contrast, negotiated understanding—the predominant conceptualization of meaning in the framing literature—is the result of more dynamic and sometimes adversarial processes. Whereas scholars of discourse focus on the role of texts in meaning making, and scholars of rhetoric explore the use of language in persuasion, research on framing emphasizes the processes that movement actors or institutional entrepreneurs employ to crystallize meanings. Specifically, framing processes entail the production and maintenance of meaning for constituents, antagonists, and bystanders or observers (Snow & Benford, 1988). Such meanings, which are often the result of negotiation among different participants in the movement as well as external constituents (Gamson, 1992), take the form of collective action frames.

Collective action frames are "endogenous to a field of actors" and "subject to challenge and modification" (Lounsbury, et al., 2003: 72). As such, many scholars using a framing perspective imply rivalry and struggles between sets of actors carrying opposing meanings. For example, Granqvist and Laurila (2011) demonstrate antagonistic frames when they examine how scientists in the nanotechnology field engaged in efforts to alter the frames developed by the futurists to adjust and negotiate the boundaries of the emerging field. Similarly, Laegreid and Serigstad (2006) bring competition between meanings to the center of their study of the reorganization of Norway's homeland security administration in the early 2000s. The Defense Committee framed homeland security as a military concern, whereas the Justice Committee emphasized peacetime issues. The subsequent hybrid reorganization was the result of a contested negotiation process between parties who were forced to reach a compromised understanding.

Whereas competition and framing contests abound, framing processes are not exclusively adversarial. Indeed, research shows that framing can be used to reach shared understandings; actors may accept their responsibilities, often because of compromises between the interests of different parties (Borum, 2004; Khaire, 2014). Reinecke and Ansari

(2016) provide one such example. They examine how NGOs and the State of Congo used framing to convince companies from the mineral industry to assume responsibility for severe human rights abuse and collaborate on a solution with NGOs and government.

Different mechanisms of meaning formation are linked to different notions of meaning. The mechanisms proposed in the discourse and rhetoric perspectives tend to be outcome oriented and look at field-level meaning as shared understanding. Discourse is concerned with institutionalization and legitimacy of fields and practices, whereas rhetoric seeks to elicit emotional or rational responses in the audience. Conversely, the mechanisms proposed in the framing literature are more process oriented and associated with political action. As such, they entail a conceptualization of meaning as negotiated understanding.

Static vs. Dynamic Meaning Making

In a certain sense, as "mechanisms," discourse, rhetoric, and frames imply a dynamic. For example, scholars of discourse argue that "the meanings of discourses are shared and social, emanating out of actors' actions in producing texts" (Phillips et al., 2004: 637). At the same time, scholars of framing maintain that frames originate from "active struggles and negotiations over meaning" (Gray et al., 2015: 116) before they can be summoned as part of the cultural repertoires of a field. Although all of the studies in our sample pay attention to processes of meaning making, the extent to which they do justice to the dynamism of these processes varies, from thin and rather static accounts to rich accounts that consider the different ways that meaning can unfold. Indeed, about one fourth of the studies in our review (15 out of 61) depict meaning making in surprisingly static ways. Although these studies involve a kind of change, it is a totalizing process where one set of institutionalized meanings is replaced with another, and this process is usually directed by the dominant actors in a field. Examples of such papers in the discourse literature include Caruana and Crane's (2008) account of the creation of the "responsible tourist" concept, where meaning making is essentially driven by a corporate website, as well as Lavie and Dhoest's (2015) analysis of quality television, where meanings are the result of the discourses of television creators and critics.

Similar to discourse, the literature on rhetoric tends to focus on textual and visual tools used by institutional entrepreneurs or other leading constituencies to persuade other field actors about the opportunity and legitimacy of a change in policy, strategy, or practice—but without due attention to the responses of those other actors. For example, Brown et al. (2012) investigate the moral and emotional appeals contained in a government report that advocated for a reform of aged care. They focus on the government's effort to shift field logics, but overlook the actual reactions and the meaningful responses of the target audience. Even in the framing literature, despite the evidence of negotiations among field actors, some papers still tend to view meaning making as the result of framing process led by a dominant constituency (e.g., the managers of socially responsible mutual funds in Markowitz, Cobb, and Hedley, 2012), or external and authoritative sources such as gourmet food writers (Johnston & Baumann, 2007) and music journalists (Appelrouth, 2003).

Beyond this segment of static views, we identify four categories of more dynamic meaning making in this literature. Specifically, we conceive of meaning making as more dynamic when it (1) is influenced by changes in historic and material contexts of a field, including economic, political, and cultural factors; (2) incorporates audience participation in meaning making; (3) involves negotiations or interactions among different actors; (4) and when it combines changes in the historical and material contexts with negotiations or interactions among actors. We provide examples of these papers, starting with the least dynamic (category 1) and proceeding through category 4, the most dynamic (Appendix A accounts for each paper by category in column 6).

Ten studies in our review illustrate a dynamic around historical and material change. For instance, Hartz and Steger (2010) argue that meaning is generated by mass media narratives, through the production of "meaningful discourses" linked to economic changes over time that shape and shift media narratives. In support of their argument, the authors identify two distinct narratives in the discussion of corporate governance in German newspapers: A more favorable "boom narrative" from 1998–2002, and a negative "decline narrative" from 2001–2003. The economic crisis starting in mid-2001 triggered the "decline narrative." In a similar study that focuses on rhetoric, Hirsch and DeSoucey (2006) show that corporations' rhetoric of restructuring as a defensive move was linked to changes in the economic landscape (e.g., globalization,

economic recession, stock market collapse) that provided a rationale for the practice and increased its acceptance. Finally, Fiss and Hirsch (2005) highlight the influence of historic, economic, political and cultural factors in the media framing of globalization. After the collapse of Wall Street in 1987, newspaper articles switched from a neutral to a negative frame on globalization, voicing concern about the instability of the stock market. In the mid-1990s, when the anti-globalization movement increased in numbers and prominence, newspapers started to address negative consequences of globalization such as loss of American jobs, cultural homogenization, and international crime.

A smaller sample of four slightly more dynamic studies includes representations of audience participation. For instance, in their study on the rhetorical strategy of Toyota's print ads, Garland et al. (2013) highlight the visual rhetoric that the car manufacturer employed to evoke nature, harmony, and agency (or lack thereof), as well as the repertoire of meanings these themes suggested to the public. Rather than focusing merely on Toyota's goals, this analysis highlights the audience's imaginative processes that led to meaning making. Similarly, in the framing literature, Khaire (2014) finds that the high-end Indian fashion industry gained legitimacy as the result of a collective process of meaning making. Early entrepreneurs were responsible for the cognitive framing around the emerging field, fashion institutes helped build know-how and legitimacy for the new profession, and fashion magazines crystallized and diffused shared understandings on the characteristics and attributes of the industry. All together, these actions helped consumers make sense of the new field.

A thicker account of dynamism is evident in the 21 studies that involve negotiations or interactions among field actors, although, as we will discuss, only 10 of these 21 studies explicitly analyze social interactions. Overall, this account of dynamism is most frequent in the framing perspective (Borum, 2004; Djelic, 2013; Granqvist & Laurila, 2011; Guérard et al., 2013; Laegreid & Serigstad, 2006; Mora, 2006; Reinecke & Ansari, 2016; Slager et al., 2012; Weber et al., 2008), although it is not completely absent in the discourse and rhetoric literature. For example, Hardy and Maguire's (2010) notion of discursive spaces, where actors with different interests present different collections of discourses, clearly involves the role of social interaction in meaning formation. The meanings around DDT that emerged at the Stockholm convention were coproduced during the encounter of producers and consumers of discourses. In ways both similar and different, Almeling (2007)'s comparative study of the medical market for genetic material (sperm and ovules) explicitly analyzes interactions among organizational staff and clients to contrast the more altruistic and emotionally loaded meaning of egg donation with the more transactional meaning of sperm donation. Studying how different rhetorics are employed on the ground enables us to better understand the mechanisms by which rhetorics influence market outcomes.

Finally, the 11 thickest accounts of meaning making in our review combine changes in the social context with negotiations or interactions among different actors, although, as we will discuss, only two of these studies explicitly analyze interactions. In one of the stronger articles in this category, Jones et al. (2012) analyze texts and the buildings of eminent architects to examine how the relations among different types of architects and their clients shaped the discourses accompanying the formation of the de novo category of 'modern architecture.' They find that meanings were negotiated among actors who came from different societal sectors and drew from specific institutional logics. The influence of clients' logics on the discourse on modern architecture is evidence of co-construction of meanings within a field. In the rhetoric stream, Spicer and Fleming (2007) analyze how the government employed the rhetoric of globalization to justify the restructuring of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and how consumer pressure groups and unions opposed the restructuring. In particular, the government's rhetoric was fragmented by means of alternative discourses that extended and reshaped the debate. While using a framing approach, Ansari et al. (2013) study the collective process leading to the formation of the climate change logic over a period of 40 years. Their process model, which highlights the links among "field-configuring events," changes in actors' frames, and the development of field frames, enlightens how consensus emerges around a contested topic.

The examples above show that discourse, rhetoric, and frame researchers have incorporated some dynamic elements in their analyses of meaning making in fields. However, interactions are explicitly analyzed in only 12 of the 61 articles that we reviewed (See column 7 in Appendix A). In 14 other articles, social interactions are acknowledged by the authors, but go unanalyzed. In 35 of the articles, interactions are left implicit and go unanalyzed.

Thus, in 49 of the 61 articles social interactions are assumed by the processes of meaning making, but unaccounted for, and remain a key missing dynamic. At worst, without a focus on interactions, meaning making is treated as a totalizing process where new sets of meanings substitute for existing ones. At best, coalescence, contestation, and negotiation over meaning remain abstract phenomena, and we do not know enough about what happens on the ground. We believe this is a critical issue that cuts across all three perspectives—discourse, rhetoric, and frames—and we elaborate on it in the following section.

CRITICAL ISSUES: SOCIAL INTERACTION AS A MECHANISM AND SOURCE OF MEANING

As our review shows, the study of fields has relied on discourse, rhetoric, and framing to explain the emergence and diffusion of meanings around new practices, policies, and markets. Although these literatures align with the notion of organizational fields as relational spaces (Wooten & Hoffman, 2008), they tend to overlook social interaction as a key mechanism and source of meanings. In obscuring the fundamental mechanism of social interaction, they become only partly relational.

For instance, although we agree with Pacheco, York, Dean and Sarasvathy (2010: 1004) that institutional entrepreneurship has brought human agency into the study of institutional change, we have found that the literature on discourses commonly examines the outcome of discourse rather than the interactional process itself. As such, we do not know enough about the mechanisms through which discourses generate meaning for a field's actors or how they are created and changed. For instance, Maguire and Hardy (2006) highlight the "authorial agency" of the institutional entrepreneurs who participated in the construction of a new institution, The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. Agency, however, is narrowly defined in terms of the discourses used by the proponents of the new precautionary discourse and the advocates of the legacy discourse of sound science, respectively. The would-be interactions, then, are presumed through the juxtaposition of texts that represent opposing factions rather than the actual social exchanges that generate local meanings. However, common sense tells us that these authors were not lonely isolates acting in a vacuum, and that all the actors involved in the field had roles in the construction of meaning. Similarly, in their study on the deinstitutionalization of DDT, Maguire and Hardy (2009) argue that the content of newspaper editorials, federal legislation, and scientific textbooks that problematized the use of DDT was the result of multiple acts of translation that cumulatively altered the meaning surrounding the pesticide. However, by definition "translation connotes an interaction that involves negotiation between various parties" (Zilber, 2006: 283). When discourse analysis limits itself to written texts, the vital mechanism of interaction is obscured.

In other words, to the extent that interactions generate texts but also have their own dynamics and properties (Goffman 1983, Rawls 1987), the role of those additional dynamics and their implications for meaning and field formation go unexamined. Although it is true that existing discourses can partially script interactions, the various ways that actors interpret and relate to the content of texts cannot be fully anticipated. In addition, the very texts that are emphasized in discourse analysis are oftentimes themselves generated from social interactions.

Despite the more strongly agentic perspective in the research on rhetoric, the focus on written sources to document rhetorical strategies and tools can, at times, favor a structural account of meaning formation, overlooking the dynamic interactions among actors and the meanings that are generated from interaction. For instance, Suddaby and Greenwood (2005) analyze the transcripts of public hearings on multidisciplinary law practice and auditor independence to describe the "discursive struggles" of proponents and opponents of multidisciplinary partnerships. Although this approach is well suited to demonstrate the existence of opposing logics, as well as the ability of rhetoric to shift the dominant institutional logic, it does not do justice to the dynamic process through which these logics formed and evolved on the ground, including the social interactions among the individuals involved and the struggles internal to the actors. It is as though the rhetoric itself, rather than people using the rhetoric in social interaction, does the work of institutional change.

Finally, framing is an inherently active process, but when scholars focus more on the content of frames than on their use in social interactions, these dynamics become strangely static. For example, Weber et al. (2008) highlight the role of cultural codes in guiding the framing processes behind the creation of the market for grass-fed meat and dairy products. Whereas the use of cultural

codes is an important contribution to our understanding of markets' construction, interview and archival data gloss the interactions and struggles through which producers and consumers developed a collective identity around the new market. It is as if the codes, and not the people, do the work of framing.

In all of these ways, these approaches, all of which focus on the mechanisms of meaning making, are, at worst, oddly static, or, at best, partial in their understandings. Although we do not downplay the merits of these works—and they are considerable in that they introduce matters of pluralism, change, and agency into institutional theory—we seek to build on these strengths via an explicit focus on social interaction.

One of the benefits of putting interaction at the heart of the analysis is the ability to provide a fully dynamic, layered account of meaning making in fields. Instead of reverting to the kind of macrosociological view of meaning evident in new institutionalism (i.e., shared or negotiated understanding) or a purely situated view of meaning (a common criticism of various forms of microsociology), the interactional focus that we propose depicts meaning as tethered understandings of broader institutional rationales or "logics." These understandings develop through social interactions that are partly reflective of the fields to which they are linked, but are also generative of those very fields (Heinze, Soderstrom, & Heinze, 2016).

The image of "tethers" is useful for conceptualizing the connections between local venues and the extra-local social pressures that exists beyond them (Menchik, Forthcoming) and helps us to think about both stability and formation in fields. In the case of stability, local understandings can be described as "tethered to" existing institutions. Here, the impetus for meaning making is a response to extra-local pressures. Although the tendency is towards stability, because of the inevitable contingencies of social interaction, there is still space for reinterpretation, recombination, change, and conflict. In the case of formation, there is a "tethering of" local understandings to the broader, nascent field, once again with all of the contingencies, misunderstandings, and possibilities for conflict that are inherent in social interaction—it is an ongoing challenge for actors to tether their own local understandings to the broader field in formation, and it is also a rich and generative process. In both "tethered" and "tethering" there is some space for endogenous change, although it is greater in the latter, and it remains an empirical question as to how closely the tethers bind fields and interactions.

To build this vision and extend what the discourse, rhetoric, and frames literatures have done to analyze meaning making, we highlight recent developments in "inhabited institutionalism," a perspective that more fully considers interactions as a mechanism and source of meaning. Studies of inhabited institutions analyze the very interactions that generate discourse, rhetoric, and frames, as well as their implications for meanings and field formation. By doing so, they unveil how logics and other forms of institutional pressure (e.g., cultural scripts) are worked out on the ground, by people doing things together (Becker, 1986; Fine & Hallett, 2014).

By going directly to interaction as a mechanism, inhabited institutionalism can help us to fully appreciate the role of meaning in the analysis of fields, especially how meanings infuse and shape practices in response to institutional pressures or change. It is through interactions that people respond creatively to institutional pressures. This facilitates a focus on the more "spontaneous" problematizing of issues, which eludes overarching frames and rhetoric or deliberate strategies. In the next section, we will see how the analysis of interactions in the inhabited institutions perspective has elucidated, among other things, how the same practices may be associated with conflict or calm (Hallett & Ventresca, 2006a, 2006b); recoupling and reconstruction of meanings following change (Hallett, 2010); processes of bricolage that satisfy multiple demands (Aurini, 2012; Binder, 2007); and different local outcomes in response to the same extralocal cultural meanings (Nunn, 2014; Reyes, 2015).

NEW INSIGHTS FROM INHABITED INSTITUTIONALISM

Inhabited institutionalism examines how institutional pressures and logics become instantiated in on-the-ground activity (McPherson & Sauder, 2013) but, as importantly, how the meanings and implications of those pressures and logics are worked out in social interactions, and how those meanings become the basis for ongoing organizational activity (Bechky, 2011; Hallett & Ventresca, 2006a; Hallett, Shulman, & Fine, 2009). Properly understood, the focus is not on individuals but instead on people doing things together (Becker, 1986), at times in concert, and at times in conflict. These collective doings are shaped but not completely

determined by institutional pressures and organizational constraints. To quote Binder:

> Organizations are not merely the instantiation of environmental, institutional logics "out there" (including technical rational logics), where workers seamlessly enact preconscious scripts valorized in the institutional environment... Instead, they are places where people and groups make sense of, and interpret, institutional "vocabularies of motive," and act on those interpretations—the central premise of symbolic interactionism. (2007: 551)

This explicit interactional focus elides the more muscular and at times "heroic" imagery of institutional entrepreneurship (Hardy & Maguire, 2008; Dorado, 2013) as well as the potential "microchauvinism" in some research on institutional work that occurs when "a sharply defined purposive 'actor'" becomes the theoretical bottom line (Jepperson & Meyer, 2011: 57). With an eye toward interactions, and in relation to the extralocal institutional environment and the immediate organizational confines, inhabited institutionalism is best understood as a meso-level approach (Fine & Hallett, 2014).[2]

Given its concern with meaning, inhabited institutionalism has a strong kinship to the work on discourse, rhetoric, and framing, and it strives to go directly to interactions as a key source of meaning. This interactional gaze helps scholars to see and identify mechanisms that are otherwise invisible but, when revealed, expand our understanding of the role of meaning (and culture more broadly) in the analysis of institutions and fields. Take, for example, the range of couplings that exist between organizations and their environments and the dynamics of those couplings. It was the observation of a disconnect between actual school activity and the formal structure of schools that compelled Meyer and Rowan (1977) to theorize the macro-institutional environment to explain why organizations look so similar despite their diverse needs. In the many diffusion studies that followed, loose coupling came to be something of a presumed state: a static condition instead of a mechanism that creates a tenuous link

between institutional myths and substantive activity. For example, the important event-history analyses that followed did not penetrate the organization to examine actual work practice, even though DiMaggio and Powell (1983, 1991) implicitly suggest a tighter link between institutional fields and practice than Meyer and Rowan.

As our review revealed, the sources of data and the mechanisms highlighted in the discourse and rhetoric perspectives—cognitive in discourse, cognitive, and emotional in rhetoric—are consistent with a conceptualization of meaning as *shared understanding*. In the framing literature, attention to conflict, negotiation, and mediation reflects an interpretation of meaning as *negotiated understanding*. Conversely, inhabited institutionalism's focus on interactions leads to a more dynamic and relational notion of meaning as *tethered understandings of extra-local rationales.* Truly unpacking decoupling, for instance, requires an understanding that different constituents both think and feel differently about institutional change and meanings. Without understanding that, researchers are glossing the meaning making in the field, because they miss much of what field actors are thinking and feeling, not to mention what they are doing. Looking at these interactions as carriers (or sources) of tethered understandings overcomes the totalizing view of meaning making that characterizes some of the discourse, rhetoric, and framing approaches. Inhabited institutionalism brings attention to the link between local action, local meanings, and the broader environment. It does so by attending to ground-level process in which action, meaning, and environment come together, and which can carry unexpected outcomes. As the following studies exemplify, when meaning is conceptualized as tethered understandings of extra-local rationales, researchers unveil multivocality, the layering of personal over institutional meanings, and the different emotional responses to the changes proposed through discourse, rhetoric, and frames.

Instead of assuming loose coupling, by focusing on social interactions inhabited institutionalism is able to examine the active mechanics of coupling and how those mechanics can vary and take multiple forms. For example, in their rereading of Gouldner's classic (1954) *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy*, Hallett and Ventresca (2006a, b) show how the ethnographic data capture interactions between a new manager and workers, interactions that created a series of couplings between the rationalized model of bureaucracy and work practices. These couplings

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[2] There are many important precursors to inhabited institutionalism and the seeds for it can be found in important work by Barley (1986), Barley and Kunda (2001), Fine (1996), Heimer (1999), Zbaracki (1998), and Bechky (2003), to name a few. Although inhabited institutionalism is becoming a common reference or citation, in this section, we limit our review to works that explicitly use and develop an inhabited institutional frame.

were not uniform. Instead, the links between some aspects of work and bureaucracy were tight and enforced in some areas but loose and unenforced in others. Likewise, these interactions were a source of conflict in some places, but not in others. Through these interactions, bureaucracy itself came to have different meanings. First, in a tightly coupled, conflicted form, bureaucracy came to mean punishment and adherence to rules as ends in themselves. Second, in a tightly coupled but consensual form, it represented regulations that promoted worker interests and came to mean safety. Third, in a loosely coupled form, it came to mean "mock bureaucracy," and enabled the workers to hew to old practices dressed in formal regulations. These three diverse coupling mechanisms and corresponding meanings *are* the "Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy."

In a subsequent study, Hallett (2010) focuses on local action and tethered understandings of extra-local institutional rationales by examining how a new principal brought the logic of accountability to an urban school through her interactions with teachers. By focusing on these interactions, Hallett is able to identify and study an unrecognized mechanism, "recoupling," the "process of creating tight couplings where loose couplings were once in place" (2010: 54). The "re" in recoupling signifies a dynamic change of state, and in recoupling the school to accountability the new principal disrupted the established order that the teachers held dear. This opened up opportunities to observe different emotional responses, as well as multivocality in meaning making. For the teachers, the recoupling created "epistemic distress," a collapse of meaning, certainty, and expectations. Taking a further step into ongoing interactions, Hallett is able to see how the teachers responded through a partisan reconstruction of meaning. As a result, "accountability," which seemed rational from the perspective of policy-makers and administrators, took on a very different, pejorative and emotional meaning, that of chaotic "turmoil."[3]

By focusing on interactions, Hallett identifies a recoupling in an arena that organizational and institutional scholars had long presumed to be loosely

coupled (public schools). Shifting to a different but related sector, Aurini (2012) uses inhabited institutionalism to examine the unexpected couplings and decouplings that exist between market pressures and teaching practices in *for-profit* tutoring franchises. Given the for-profit motive of these organizations, we would expect that the practices used by tutors would be tightly coupled to the market. Indeed, by carefully observing the training of tutors and their interactions with students, Aurini shows how the market rationale flooded the organization, and, reflecting that environment, the franchise that she studied had a mandated curriculum and a set of prescribed practices for the tutors to follow. However, Aurini also shows how tutors layered their personal meanings over the institutional meanings. They created space for themselves even as they followed the letter of the franchise law. During their interactions with the students, the tutors selectively interpreted, prioritized, and blended the frameworks that governed their actions to meet the particular needs of the situation. Through this process, they were able to create structural looseness and avoid turmoil even within the confines of a tightly coupled organization. If Aurini had not focused on these interactions, she would have missed these layering and coupling mechanisms by which meaning was created in the organization.

The processes of interpretation, prioritization, and blending that the tutors used in Aurini's study might be called "bricolage" (Douglas, 1986), a layering mechanism that gains further clarity and import in Binder's (2007) case study of a transitional housing organization. In the context of a complex and multivocal institutional environment characterized by professional norms, federal mandates, service obligations, and funding via philanthropy ("non-profit federalism"), Binder carefully charts how administrators in the various subunits of the organization "neither purely rationalize their actions nor seamlessly follow institutionalized scripts. Rather, they combine and generate practices that are intended to satisfy multiple demands, and they do so in interaction with others" (2007: 549). The results of this bricolage can be surprising, as when a professional child advocate willingly embraced federal mandates and funding justifications to win her arguments with others and get what she ultimately wanted, even as those competing logics would seem to undermine her professional stature. In focusing on such interactions, we can see layering processes occurring on the ground: institutional pressures that may seem incommensurate can become tightly coupled, and, at

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[3] In a series of related studies, Everitt (2012, 2013, forthcoming) examines how novice teachers respond to and interpret accountability in the course of their occupational training by developing "arsenals of practice" and an "injunction to adapt" such that their teaching is tightly coupled to accountability even as their own practices are heterogeneous.

the same time, these couplings can change from tight to loose, at times rapidly, from situation to situation.

These studies of accountability and coupling in organizations show how, through their interactions, people respond creatively to institutional pressures. In addition, and in some contrast to the conceptualization of meaning in discourse, rhetoric, and framing approaches, these studies focus on interaction to examine meanings as tethered understandings of extra-local logics. First, as Hallett's (2010) study demonstrates, pressures to adopt a particular field-level logic may appear to succeed, but in fact provoke strong and unsettling emotions and interactions among meaning-makers on the ground. One way to deal with these unsettling emotions is by layering personal meanings over institutional ones. When doing that, local inhabitants may resist in ways that are unpredictable and invisible to scholars who study more-sedimented residues of meaning. With a focus on interaction, both Aurini (2012) and Binder (2007) show that the local practices adopted by organizational participants reflect interpretations that emerge rapidly in response to situations they face. Attentiveness to such dynamics would enrich understandings of field formation and change.

Moreover, accountability is not the only institutional logic or "cultural myth" that confronts organizations and is amenable to local actions and tethered understandings. Two recent studies utilize observations and interviews to examine how people doing things together inhabit success ideologies and the logic of multiculturalism in the field of education. In a comparative study of three different high schools, Nunn (2014) shows how each school embraced an achievement ideology of success. Nevertheless, based on their social context and reflecting the socioeconomic status of their students, the administrators at each school interpreted and promoted different definitions of success. In other words, meaning making around success reflected the multivocality and diversity of the schools, and each school had a different "success identity." At a school serving low-income students, success was defined as "effort." At a mixed income, racially diverse charter school success was defined as the opposite of failure and it was joined with an intense fear of appearing below average. At a wealthy suburban comprehensive school, success was defined as intelligence plus initiative. Revealing yet another layer, Nunn examines how the *students* interpreted, responded, and at times criticized and rejected these definitions.

Reyes (2015) uses a similar approach to examine how Latino students at a liberal arts college,

a research university, and a regional public university responded to and interpreted the institutional logic of multiculturalism, and how those different interpretations became the basis of their approaches to politics.[4] Using inhabited institutionalism, Reyes can show how and why similar groups of students responded to the same logic of multiculturalism in rather different ways, crafting political styles that were alternatively deliberative, divisive, or contentious. By examining these interactions and meanings, Reyes avoids the totalizing tendencies of crude identity politics.

In their studies of these organizations, Nunn (2014) and Reyes (2015) are less interested in how broad cultural meanings (of success or multiculturalism) are legitimized by discourse in the media, framed by central parties, or justified through rhetorical appeals. Instead, they show how, by going about their lives inside of these schools, students may add layers, emotions, and action to those cultural meanings, turning them into different, and consequential, outcomes. By going more directly to interactions as a source of meaning, they give an unvarnished account of these dynamics, revealing subtleties that would otherwise be missed.

As this series of studies demonstrates, and consistent with its focus on interactions among field actors and local activity, inhabited institutionalism offers a rich conceptualization of meaning as tethered understandings of extra-local cultural rationales or "logics." With this comes the ability to observe unexpected outcomes and to identify mechanisms such as decoupling, recoupling, and bricolage, which emphasize multivocality, layering of personal over institutional meanings, and a range of emotional responses to change.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDYING MECHANISMS AND MEANING IN FIELDS

In studying social interactions within organizations, scholars may well capture discourse, rhetoric, and framing. However, at the field level, multivocality, layering, and the multiplicity of actions are greatly amplified as compared with organizational settings. Although inhabited institutionalism has much to offer to the study of meaning making, it has been, at times, limited by its ethnographic tendencies. There is no doubt that ethnography yields rich data on how institutions shape organizations via the

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[4] Methodologically, Nunn and Reyes are both inspired by Binder and Wood (2013).

interactions of the people who inhabit them. Yet, scholars are just starting to think about how inhabited institutionalism can be used to study and imagine larger field dynamics. In this, research on discourse, rhetoric and framing are exceptionally valuable.

In reviewing the literature on discourse, rhetoric, and framing, we do not mean to be overly critical. Instead, we draw inspiration from a number of exemplary studies in our sample of articles. These studies attend to multiple perspectives and combine multiple data sources. In doing so, they identify a broader range of meaningful dynamics, including but not limited to social interaction.

Attending to Multiple Perspectives and Combining Multiple Data Sources

Fields often include multiple sub-populations (Hoffman, 1999) and when multiple positions exist on issues that are relevant to a field (Guérard et al., 2013; Maguire & Hardy, 2006; Swan et al., 2010; Zilber, 2007) each constituency may employ discourse, rhetoric, or frames to gain influence on its counterpart. Attention to these multiple positions and the way they affect each other can provide us with a fuller understanding of multivocality and layering in meaning making. In one such exemplary study, Swan et al. (2010) examine how multiple parties used rhetoric during a failed policy intervention of the UK government, revealing "dialectical processes of resistance or accommodation" to change (Swan et al., 2010: 1312) that account for the development of pluralistic meanings in fields.

The best studies in our sample not only incorporate multiple perspectives; they do so by using multiple data sources. Different constituencies often produce different sets of texts, which reflect their own discourses, rhetoric, frames, and meanings. In another exemplary article, Huault and Rainelli-Le Montagner (2009) combine archival and interview data to provide a longitudinal analysis of rhetoric in the emerging field of credit derivatives from the mid-1990s to 2004. Initially, the rhetoric employed by the investment banks to justify the creation of credit derivatives aligned with financial theories of risk, and argued that "the marketization of new risks is inherently advantageous" (Huault & Rainelli-Le Montagner, 2009: 562). However, insurance companies perceived credit derivatives as a way to transfer financial risk to them, and did not fall for the banks' argument. This position was shared by French and other European regulators. To enhance their

credibility and secure clients, banks engaged in a persuasion campaign on the specialized press, emphasizing the advantages of credit derivatives in terms of profitability and diversification. Despite this effort, differences in meanings endured, and European regulators remained skeptical of credit derivatives.

Moving Forward: Combining Linguistic and Interactionist Approaches

As we have seen, discourse, rhetoric, and framing approaches benefit when they get closer to social interactions as a key source and mechanism of meaning formation. The arrow points both ways, and inhabited institutionalism can benefit and draw from the numerous merits of linguistic approaches. Moving forward, inhabited institutionalism can and should expand beyond ethnography to employ some of the same methodologies used in discursive, rhetoric, and framing approaches, especially when those techniques can capture interaction as a point of institutional connection and as a source of meaning (Haedicke & Hallett, 2016). In doing so, scholars can expand their focus from specific organizations to fields more generally—the strong suit of discourse, rhetoric, and framing approaches.

In one such recent example, Kameo (2015) combines an inhabited institutional approach with interviews, archives, and textual analysis to study how Japanese bioscientists responded to the legal codification of funding and obligations between universities and private entities, also known as the "Japanese Bayh-Dole Act." Across the field, scientists venerated their prior local, personal interactions with donors. They layered their own meanings on top of the new law by "pulling in" their old practices of informal gift exchange even as they conformed to the new, formal contractual regulations. In this way, the scientists developed a creative but also distinctively Japanese field response to the Japanese Bayh-Dole Act. They used their old practices as a kind of rope, effectively tethering their own understandings to the field.

Haedicke (2012, 2016) uses a similar combination and approach. In his study of Natural Foods Co-ops he uses textual, archival, interview, and observational methods to show how actors employ layering to respond to institutional pressures. More specifically, as the market for organic foods became increasingly competitive, co-ops were pushed to conform to the formal administrative models that are characteristic of the for-profit grocer industry. Yet,

they found ways to translate the market so that it could still correspond to their mission by emphasizing efficiency instead of profit. Via this translation mechanism, a form of layering, the meaning of "co-op" changed to incorporate competition for the sake of the mission. Importantly, this occurred across the field, and not just for particular organizations.

In another recent study, Hallett and Meanwell (2016) use verbatim transcriptions of congressional hearings to link local interactions to unexpected outcomes in the field of education. When the federal educational policy "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB) was up for reauthorization in 2007, most policy analysts and politicians assumed it would be reauthorized with little trouble. Indeed, a draft reauthorization bill had bipartisan support and the dominant frame for the congressional hearings was a "fix it" frame. This frame was employed broadly by members of Congress and the different stakeholders who testified. However, by looking beyond this common frame and by examining the interactions evident in the hearing texts, Hallett and Meanwell uncover additional dynamics. During the hearings, the participants identified a range of problems with NCLB. In doing so, they exercised multivocality, by attaching an alternative meaning to the policy, such that "NCLB means children left behind." These interactions unexpectedly shifted the meaning of the NCLB from a legitimate accountability rationale to a potentially problematic reform, and the reauthorization effort ultimately failed.

Within the discourse, rhetoric, and framing traditions a few scholars have been using methods that capture ongoing interactions such as participant observation or other ethnographic techniques, which enable them to see how meaning making occurs in situ and behind the scenes. For instance, examining the discourses that emerged during interactions across groups, Zilber (2007) provides a dynamic approach to the construction of meaning. Through observations at an annual field conference in 2001, she explores the use of discourses in the construction of multiple meanings around the Israeli high-tech crisis that followed the 2000 dot-com bubble. The primary account was the "institutional story" shared by both professional services providers and venture capitalists (VCs). This narrative celebrated technology, called for unity within the field, and displayed optimism regarding the future. However, privately, in parallel to the "institutional story," constituencies developed alternative accounts of the crisis: professional services providers blamed the "greedy VCs," for investing in start-ups that were actually worthless. The VCs pointed the finger toward the lack of managerial skills of high-tech entrepreneurs and start-ups.

As these studies begin to show, a focus on interactions in fields enables researchers to observe how understandings are situated locally but can expand to shape broader field understandings, as actors layer their multiple meanings in ways that may result in unexpected outcomes. Moreover, by combining linguistic and interactional approaches, scholars are starting to make theoretical contributions by uncovering new processes and structures.

Another promising direction that combines interactions and discourse focuses attention on the social spaces where issues are debated (Hardy & Maguire, 2010; Zilber, 2011). Discourses are produced and consumed through interactions, and different social spaces provide opportunities and rules for different mechanisms of meaning construction. This type of work recognizes that discourses not only drive understandings and behaviors (Phillips et al., 2004) but also provide settings that enable and constrain the interactions that promulgate discourses (Hall, 2001). By observing different discursive spaces, researchers can investigate how multivocality and the layering of meanings can result in the emergence of situated understandings that become far more general over time.

As we have seen, rhetoric studies provide a means to explore the diversity of meanings generated through rational, moral, and emotional arguments. An inhabited institutional approach to the study of rhetoric may allow for a finer understanding of the reactions to different arguments, including the conditions under which each type of rhetoric is more effective. For example, Leibel (2017) draws from inhabited institutionalism to explore the interplay of rhetoric and the local context, in her study of the Slow Money movement, which connects local food entrepreneurs to local investors, across the United States. Her direct observation of the interactions among Slow Money's members at the local meetings held in different parts of the country has revealed that each chapter of Slow Money developed different interpretations of the movement principles, depending on the local strength of infrastructural endowment vis-à-vis community support. This variety of local understandings fostered a heterogeneous field, as the chapters were tethering their understandings to the emergent field, particularly with respect to the range of financial practices employed by entrepreneurs and investors. By going to interaction as a key mechanism and source of

meaning, Leibel shows how the same rhetoric is received, interpreted, and adapted differently in different local contexts, which contributes to both the development of homegrown meanings and the general meaning of "Slow Money."

Grodal and O'Mahony's (2017) study of the nanotechnology field is another example of a fine-grained, longitudinal, field-level analysis that combines observations and archival data to examine how meaning making on the ground produces unanticipated courses of action. Examining the "grand challenge" of creating molecular manufacturing, Grodal and O'Mahony (2017) reveal the processes by which a common goal, sustained by a common rhetoric, succumbed to individual, less-ambitious rhetoric and goals. Field actors were initially mobilized by means of goal grafting, "the layering of a shared goal on top of existing interests." However, in the long term, grafting acted as a double-edged sword, and existing interests ended up displacing the big, collective goal.

Finally, a few scholars have begun to explore how interactions contribute to the formation of new frames. In their study of environmental issues in civil aviation, Litrico and David (2017) take advantage of ethnographic methods to explore how field actors combine cultural frames to give meaning to the issues they face. Fieldwork at industry conferences and interviews with relevant actors allowed for the identification of six specific cultural frames employed by four groups in the field (airlines, airports, suppliers, and collective actors), whereas textual analysis of the quotes from the aviation trade journal traced the use and combination of such frames over a period of 15 years.

In sum, inhabited institutionalism and linguistic approaches can be fruitfully combined to lend a deeper understanding of the dynamic processes of meaning making in fields. For inhabited institutionalism, the challenge is to expand beyond the traditional limitations of ethnography to understand how "people doing things together" matter not only for discrete organizations, but also larger organizational fields, and the field-focus is one of the strengths of the various linguistic approaches. For discourse, rhetoric, and framing approaches, the challenge is to get closer to interaction as a key source and mechanism of meanings. With its focus on tethered understandings of larger institutional rationales, inhabited institutionalism provides a means for doing so without resorting to decontextualized situationalism. As these examples show, the opportunities to contribute to this growing body of research are plentiful, and should be particularly enticing for scholars who are interested in better understanding the origins and persistence of heterogeneity and change in field meanings.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As organizational theory has developed over time, institutional thinking has changed, even as interest in fields has remained. Increasingly, scholars recognize that the role of meaning (read culture) can be dynamic and creative in addition to constraining and structuring. The conceptualization of meaning has become multifaceted, and with this has come attention to discourse, rhetoric, and framing as sources of meaning in organizational fields. This important work has brought the richness of meaning to the fore, and on their faces discourse, rhetoric, and frames are dynamic mechanisms. In many of the studies that we have reviewed this holds true. Nevertheless, there is a hazard: If scholars treat these phenomena as abstracted categories that "do the work," of social construction, these approaches become as static as the earlier institutional theories that suffered from "metaphysical pathos," a focus on abstraction that displaces action and then ignores it (DiMaggio 1988; Gouldner, 1954). There is a danger in reifying texts: they become untethered from the interactions that comprise them. One way to avoid this pathos without resorting to methodological individualism is to remember that discourse, rhetoric, and framing are commonly features of social interaction. By going more directly to interaction as a mechanism and source of meaning, scholars can examine how discourse, rhetoric, and framing are used, and they can also learn more about the dynamics of fields.

We have argued that inhabited institutionalism provides a complementary framework, and considerable analytic power can be gained by combining these collective insights. There is much to be gained for inhabited institutionalism as well: Scholars using this approach have tended to examine focal organizations, with ethnography being the norm. Although these studies yield rich data on how institutions shape organizations via the interactions of the people who inhabit them, scholars are just beginning to imagine how the approach can be used to study larger field dynamics. As with any case-based approach, generalizability remains a concern for inhabited institutionalism and its interactionist cousins. These concerns are alleviated (although certainly not resolved) in two ways. First, as we have

argued, inhabited institutionalism is best understood as a meso approach, and not a micro one. With this, it attempts to look two ways at once (Haedicke & Hallett, 2016), towards both the institutional environment and local interactions. Inhabited institutionalism takes interactions seriously but it tries to avoid the "interactionist fallacy," the notion that local activity can be understood without reference to its extralocal constituent parts. Inhabited institutionalism focuses on tethered understandings: the recursive relationship between institutions and agency, as it manifests itself in social interactions.

Second, although the empirical specifics of a particular case study are difficult to generalize, the processes identified in these studies travel more broadly. For example, although the "turmoil" that Hallett (2010) identified in his study of an elementary school might be specific to that case, "recoupling" is a much more general process. Likewise, although the empirical details of a case might vary, the general layering processes and multivocality of meaning that we have examined in our review occur more broadly.

To expand beyond case-based approaches and develop more general insights, inhabited institutionalism, discourse, rhetoric, and framing approaches can all benefit from recent developments in field-level ethnography, which demands a rich understanding of the institutional environment. Indeed, in her road map for conducting field-level ethnography, Zilber suggests that

> Doing ethnography beyond a single organization – at the organizational field – entails a dual movement, both bottom-up and top down. One should theoretically establish a working definition of the phenomenon studied, by grappling with diverse definitions of the inter-organizational sphere . . . At the same time, one should analyze the field empirically, to better grasp where the action takes place, and where and how the social boundaries lie and are worked out (2014: 108).

Inhabited institutionalism is a meso approach that needs to "go big," and for this reason, one of the goals of our review is to encourage more research that explores larger field dynamics, combining linguistic and inhabited approaches. With this, the research on discourse, rhetoric, and framing have much to offer, especially when they present multiple perspectives and use multiple sources of data. For discourse, rhetoric, and framing approaches, the challenge is to get closer to interaction as a key source and

mechanism of meanings. With this, the research on inhabited institutions has much to offer, and taken together and in combination, these approaches provide valuable tools for future research on the dynamics of fields.

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Esther Leibel (eleibel@bu.edu) is Assistant Professor of Strategy and Innovation at the Boston University Questrom School of Business. Her research interests include the dynamics of field formation, entrepreneurship, and sustainability. Her ethnographic work explores the interdependence between institutional variation and the evolution of local meanings, practices, and vocabularies.

Tim Hallett (hallett9@indiana.edu) is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at Indiana University. His empirical and theoretical research on inhabited institutions has appeared in journals such as Theory and Society, Social Psychology Quarterly, American Sociological Review, Organizational Studies, and Symbolic Interaction.

Beth A. Bechky (bbechky@stern.nyu.edu) is the Jacob B. Melnick Term Professor of Management and Organizations at the New York University Stern School of Business. Her research on the dynamics of work at organizational and occupational boundaries has appeared in journals such as Administrative Science Quarterly, American Journal of Sociology, Academy of Management Journal, and Organization Science.

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