Issue Change in Social Movement Organizations:

Antecedents and Consequences

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By

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Abstract

This dissertation studies the antecedents and consequences of issue change in social movement organizations, i.e., when they decide to protest for a different topic. Even though social movement research emphasizes the importance of organizational change for adaptation, issue change has been ignored so far. Using data from the Dynamics of Collective Action and US Policy Agenda Project, I examine why and to what effects 4,442 social movement organizations changed their issues in the United States between 1960 and 1995. Therefore, I invent a temporal typology of issue change, distinguishing between four types of issue change: *substitutions*, *diversifications*, *excursions*, and *explorations*. To analyze the antecedents and consequences for each issue change type, I develop a novel field theory of issue change and a variety of theoretical mechanisms. Applying a wide range of statistical techniques, from longitudinal network analysis to mediation analysis, regression analysis, and counterfactual network simulations, provides support for the dissertation's theoretical arguments.

The three manuscripts that form this dissertation show how often and why SMOs conduct specific types of issue change (Manuscript I), how these issue change types affect SMOs' mobilization, coalition-building, and longevity (Manuscript II), and how they affect the cohesion and continuity of social movements (Manuscript III). Based on these findings, this dissertation argues that issue change matters and needs to be part of social movement research's sociological imagination and toolkit.

Preface

The three manuscripts that form this dissertation are listed below.

Kappes, Marcel. Maneuvering the Field of Change: Why Social Movement Organizations Change Their Issues.

Kappes, Marcel. Paving the Way to WUNC: How Social Movement Organizations Thrive Through Issue Change.

Kappes, Marcel. Cohesion and Continuity in Social Movements: Issue-changing SMOs as Integrators, Preservers, and Generational Brokers.

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Für meine Eltern, Oma und Freund*innen

Contents

Overview

This dissertation studies the antecedents and consequences of issue changes conducted by social movement organizations (SMOs). Issue change takes place if SMOs change the topics of their protests. In 1991, for instance, *Greenpeace U.S.A.*, which until then had only worked on Environmental Protection, started to organize Peace protests against the upcoming Gulf War. An understandable issue change considering the damage war inflicts on the environment. However, why did *Greenpeace U.S.A.* not already protest against earlier US military operations in the 1970s and 1980s? Other issue changes are even less intuitive. Take, for example, the *Gay Activists Alliance*, which initially protested for Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights but began to protest for Social Welfare in the early 1970s. Why did the *Gay Activists Alliance* abandon their narrow identity-related issue for a broad issue such as Social Welfare? Especially considering that far more SMOs were already engaged in the latter issue than in the former. Moreover, why did they return to Gay and Lesbian Rights after a short period? What motivates SMOs like *Greenpeace U.S.A.* and the *Gay Activists Alliance* to conduct such issue changes? What are their consequences? Do issue changes benefit or harm SMOs? How prevalent is issue change in general? How does it affect social movements at large?[1] The present dissertation uses an established US protest data set and generates new theoretical and empirical insights to answer these questions and to provide the first systematic overview of how SMOs change their issues.

While organizational change in SMOs has been a vibrant topic in social movement research for over half a century, the topic of issue change has mainly been overlooked (for an exception see Larson 2009). This neglect had early roots. In contrast to goal and tactical change, issue change was already conspicuously absent in Zald and Ash's (1966) inaugural article *Social Movement Organizations: Growth Decay and Change*. In hindsight, Zald and Ash did not only

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[1] Throughout this dissertation, I define SMOs as formal organizations embedded in and working for the goals of social movements (McCarthy & Zald 1973), which are series of contentious displays of campaigns, repertoires, and WUNC displays of actors working towards social change (Tilly et al. 2020).

establish the field but also a path dependency. Since their agenda-setting article, empirical research on organizational research has mainly fallen into one of two strands, focusing either on tactical change (e.g., McAdam 1983; Staggenborg 1988; Voss and Sherman 2000; McCammon et al. 2008; Wang and Soule 2012; Wang and Soule 2016) or on the (de)radicalization of social movements' goals (e.g., Messinger 1955; Helfgot 1974; Piven and Cloward 1977; Meyer and Tarrow 1998). In 2018, issue change's neglect came full circle in Dan Wang, Alessandro Piazza, and Sarah Soule's Annual Review article entitled *Boundary-Spanning in Social Movements: Antecedents and Outcomes*. In the section "Issue and Identity Boundaries: Within and Across," the authors did not discuss issue change but coalition-building. A related yet different topic. Thus, even if social movement research implies issue change, it does not refer to issue change.

Only recently did the field start to make steps towards issue change, investigating borrowing and spillover of issues between social movements (Wang et al. 2019; Ring-Ramirez and Earl 2021; cf. Meyer and Whittier 1994). However, it is not quite there yet. Although existing studies on issue borrowing and spillover connect with issue change, they focus solely on specific moments of boundary-spanning and co-occurrence, bracketing the past and the future. Yet studying change without accounting for time is impossible. Thus, even though issue change has begun to lurk in the background of social movement research, it has not been captured yet.

Where does this neglect of issue change come from? Certainly, Zald and Ash's (1966) inaugural article set a path dependency. However, this is unlikely the only reason, given social movement research's strong emphasis on change and experimentation (e.g., Snow et al. 1986; Tarrow 1998) and the assumption that SMOs need to "bend with the wind" to adapt to everchanging environments (Zald and Ash 1966; Powell and Friedkin 1987; Minkoff 1999). Why should social movement research ignore issue change in this context? Is changing issues not a reasonable way for SMOs to adapt to changing environments? Naturally, explaining why

something did not happen is often more difficult than explaining why it did and in this particular case, it leads us into the realm of speculation. However, given the possible consequences of the neglect of issue change, even speculation is warranted and necessary. Maybe the reason why social movement research has overlooked issue change was due to what Alvin Gouldner (1955) calls "metaphysical pathos." Many social movement researchers (myself included) sympathize with SMOs and their causes (for a similar argument, see Larson 2009: 115f.). Therefore, we might have idealized SMOs as unwavering champions of societal progress and versatile Swiss Army Knives capable of tremendous agency and adaptability. However, we value this agency and adaptability only in terms of the *means* SMOs apply, e.g., tactics or strategies, and not their *ends*, e.g., goals and issues. Social movement research often perceives SMOs changing their goals with suspicion, worrying about co-optation, bureaucratization, and loss of disruptive power (e.g., Meyer and Tarrow 1998; Piven and Cloward 1975; Zald and Ash 1966). In this sense, goal change challenges our idealized notion of SMOs yet captures our interest as a lurking threat. Issue change, however, falls entirely outside what we believe our idealized SMOs would do. So, why should we study what we do not even believe exists?

In this dissertation, I show that the emperor is naked. Developing a novel typology of issue change and measurement strategy, I use data from the Dynamics of Collective Action and the US Policy Agenda Project to investigate the prevalence, antecedents, and outcomes of issue changes of 4,442 SMOs in the United States between 1960 and 1995. Applying social network analysis and regression techniques, I shed light on what motivates SMOs to conduct issue changes and their effects on SMOs and social movements.

The three manuscripts that form this dissertation offer insight into the antecedents and consequences of issue change. In the first manuscript, I show that SMOs regularly conduct different types of issue change and uncover different motivations for them using field theory. In the second manuscript, I demonstrate that conducting issue changes positively affects SMOs' mobilization, coalition-building, and longevity by enabling them to adapt and expand their issue

portfolio. In the last manuscript, I show that issue-changing SMOs contribute considerably to the cohesion and continuity of social movements, as they can act as preservers, integrators, and generational brokers.

In the remainder of this introduction, I start by how I define issue change, what types of it exist, and how I capture them empirically. Afterward, I outline the central intellectual task of this dissertation, namely, to identify the antecedents and consequences of issue change using strategies for mechanism discoverynand relational analysis. Then, I introduce the Dynamics of Collective Action and the US Policy Agenda Project data sets, discussing their advantages and drawbacks for this dissertation. Furthermore, I provide a roadmap of the dissertation's structure and briefly summarize the three manuscripts. Finally, I close with a discussion of this dissertation's findings, contributions, and limitations.

Enter Issue Changes I: What they are, and how I find them

A Temporal Typology of Issue Change

This dissertation defines issue change as taking place when SMOs decide to adopt a new issue for the first time. It also defines issue change as a strategic activity that SMOs conduct for particular ends, implying that not all issue changes are equal. Some might be radical, others more subtle. Accordingly, what motivates and what follows from them for SMOs might differ. Hence, this dissertation needs concepts and instruments sensitive enough to detect and distinguish between the most radical and subtle issue changes.

	Yes	No
No	Substitution	Exploration
Yes	Diversification	Excursion

SMO keeps Old Issues

FIG. 1. – A Temporal Typology of Issue Change

Therefore, I develop a novel temporal approach for identifying and classifying issue changes. The result is a temporal typology of issue change, which constitutes this dissertation's heart. Although its implementation is rather complex, the underlying logic is quite simple. The starting point is when an issue change occurs, for instance, when Greenpeace U.S.A. decides to start protesting for Peace in 1991. Next, I consider the SMO's old and new issues – Environmental Protection and Peace, respectively, in the running example – and whether the SMO keeps or drops them over time. All possible combinations of whether an SMO keeps or drops its old and new issue lead to four types of issue change, namely *substitutions*, *diversifications*, *excursions*, and *explorations* (see figure 1). In short, a *substitution* occurs if an SMO replaces its previous issue with a new issue, while a *diversification* occurs if a new issue joins its previous issue. An *excursion* occurs if an SMO adopts a new issue only briefly before returning to its previous issues. Lastly, an *exploration* occurs if an SMO drops its new and previous issues and starts pursuing entirely different ones. Accordingly, Greenpeace U.S.A.'s

issue change constituted a diversification, as they continued to protest for both Environmental Protection and Peace.

Why Temporal? Processual versus Substantive Ontologies of Issue Change

Thus, what makes this typology temporal is that, unlike in common classifications of organizational change, the type of an issue change only becomes apparent *over time*. It is, therefore, based on a processual ontology that emphasizes flux and embeds meaning in temporality, that is, in how things unfold in the passing of time (Abbott 2016). This processual commitment also expands the repertoire of conceivable types of issue changes. The common classification of organizational change only distinguishes between *substitutions* and *diversifications* (Gioia et al. 2013: p. 133; cf. Albert & Whetten 1985). Hence, the temporal typology introduces two new types of issue change, namely *excursions* and *explorations*.

These differences between the temporal and substantive typology emerge from differing ontological commitments and assumptions that follow about organizational change. Contrary to the temporal typology, the common typology of organizational change rests on a substantive ontology emphasizing stability and fixed, inherent meaning (cf. Abbot 1995; Abbott 2016). Two assumptions about organizational change follow from this substantive ontology. The first assumption is that for organizational change to be meaningful, it must be permanent. Ephemeral organizational change is negligible (e.g., Albert and Whetten 1985; Reger et al. 1994; Ring-Ramirez and Earl 2021). The second assumption is that organizational change is an event that occurs at a specific 'point-in-time' which also determines its type (cf. Reger et al. 1994). Thus, the type of issue change is already inherent in the moment of its conduction.

The resulting picture from these two assumptions in the substantive ontology is that organizations are stable until they suddenly change at one point-in-time, only to become immediately stable again. If this picture would be accurate, the binary distinction

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of *substitutions* and *diversifications* would be exhaustive. Empirical reality, however, shows that it is not. Consider the previous example of the *Gay Activists Alliance*, which protested only briefly for Social Welfare before returning to their previous issue of Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights in the early 1970s. The common typology would dismiss this issue change due to its ephemerality or as a failed *substitution*. In the temporal typology, however, it would clearly constitute an *excursion*.

What enables the temporal typology to capture *excursions* is its roots in a processual ontology, which dissolves the assumptions underlying the substantive typology. In the temporal typology, issue change does not have to be permanent to be meaningful, as its processual ontology emphasizes constant flux. An issue change's type is also not inherent during its conduction but emerges over time. Hence, while issue change is an event happening at a specific point-in-time in the substantive typology, it is a process unfolding over a period-of-time in the temporal typology.

Why A Temporal Typology of Issue Change Is Needed

Of course, a critic might argue that this is hair-splitting and issue change that is not permanent is negligible. After all, the *Gay Activists Alliance* has entered collective memory for their engagement for Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights. Are such *excursions* as theirs towards Social Welfare worth our attention? Yes, indeed, and for theoretical and empirical reasons. The theoretical reason is that it is simply unjustifiable to ignore non-permanent issue change, especially given social movement theory's emphasis on SMOs as strategic, flexible, and adaptive and the potential problems (discussed below) that come with permanent issue changes. Thus, if anything, from a theoretical perspective, we should expect the majority of issue changes to be ephemeral. Manuscript I of this dissertation shows exactly that. The empirical reason for paying attention to ephemeral issue changes is their impact on important outcomes for SMOs

and even whole social movements. Manuscript II of this dissertation testifies that (among others) ephemeral issue changes positively affect SMOs' mobilization, coalition-building, and longevity. Manuscript III shows how they foster the cohesion and continuity of social movements. Thus, by turning a blind eye to issue change, particularly ephemeral issue change, we would miss a consequential activity that SMOs conduct to move forward and that we need to study if we want an accurate understanding of social movements. Having clarified what issue changes are and how I find them, I next turn to what I did with them once I did.

Enter Issue Changes II: What I did once I found them

The Processual Path Not Taken

Issue change is an activity. How do you study an activity? One possibility would be to continue walking on the processual path and to investigate how issue change transforms the entities conducting it, that is, SMOs. A processual study of issue change could dive deep into the histories of SMOs, investigating how issue change takes place and unfolds on the ground in the daily life of SMOs. It could explore how issue changes are proposed, contested, and implemented in SMOs and how their implied transformations, e.g., from Peace to Women's Rights SMO, unfold. In short, a processual study would focus on the *how* of issue change.

A Mechanistic Study of Issue Change

This dissertation, however, takes a different path. It combines a mechanistic and relational approach focusing on the antecedents and outcomes of issue change, thereby bracketing the process of issue change itself. Mechanisms are scientific explanations of phenomena that consist of entities and activities "organized such that they produce regular changes from start or set-up to finish or termination conditions" (Machamer et al. 2000: 3; for an overview, see

Craver et al. 2024). Thus, in a mechanism, a phenomenon is produced by entities and their activities. A mechanistic study of issue change, therefore, aims to discover and investigate the mechanisms – and the phenomena they produce – of which it is a part. The entities in these mechanisms are SMOs conducting issue changes but also other SMOs, protestors, and funders engaging in different activities.

Strategies of Mechanism Discovery

To this end, this dissertation uses established strategies for mechanism discovery, such as forward chaining and backward tracking (Darden and Craver 2002; Darden 2002). Forward chaining may involve conjecturing about the consequences of an activity (Darden and Craver 2002: 23). Manuscript II, for instance, asks: What consequences does issue change have for SMOs? What outcomes is issue change likely to affect, and what do the mechanisms involving issue change that produce those outcomes look like? In contrast, Manuscript III rests on looking for activity signatures, a case of backward tracking, by asking: Could issue change give rise to specific properties that enable SMOs to engage in further activities producing outcomes on the level of social movements? In this way, this dissertation proposes mechanisms involving issue change and tests their empirical implications that demonstrate their importance for SMOs and social movements.

It deliberately does not develop a general theory of issue change or starts from a general social movement theory to deduce testable hypotheses. The former would have constituted a hybris, given how little is known of issue change thus far, and the latter a handicap for the explorative endeavor of this dissertation. Nonetheless, in its mechanism discovery, this dissertation builds and depends upon various social movement and organizational theory traditions, e.g., resource mobilization (McCarthy and Zald 1977), political opportunities (McAdam 1996), or organizational ecology (Carroll 1984). However, it treats these general

theories not as ends in themselves but as practical means to solve the practical problem at hand, the uncovering of the antecedents and consequences of issue change.

A Pragmatist Principle

Thus, mechanism discovery involving the activity of issue change is the primary intellectual task of this dissertation. Mechanisms, however, are always mechanisms *of* some phenomenon (Glennan 1996; Craver et al. 2024). The choice of these phenomena (or outcomes) in this dissertation is not arbitrary. It follows a pragmatist principle in that the chosen outcomes are of practical concern for SMOs and social movements (cf. Martin 2022).[2] Pragmatism conceptualizes social actors as problem solvers using habitual and creative action to respond to problem situations (Gross 2009; Whitford 2002; Joas 1996; cf. Dewey 1938). SMOs are pragmatist actors par excellence: In their attempts to solve societal problems, they encounter many second-order problems that also require solutions.

Thus, the mechanism outcomes chosen in this dissertation are *resolved* problem situations. For instance, in Manuscript II, which focuses on SMOs' problems of mobilization, coalition-building, and longevity, the mechanism outcomes are *successful* mobilization, coalition-building, and longevity. Likewise, Manuscript III addresses the problem of cohesion and continuity of social movements, its mechanism outcomes are *achieved* cohesion and continuity. By incorporating issue change as an activity in the mechanisms producing these outcomes, this dissertation presents issue change as a solution to these underlying problems for SMOs. Thus, this dissertation is a mechanistic, pragmatist study of issue change, leading to a dual quality that becomes most evident when changing perspective from the researcher to the SMO. While this dissertation understands issue changes as part of mechanisms, for SMOs, they

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[2] In this sense, this dissertation gives primacy to practical over theoretical problems. Thereby, I do not want to disregard the production of theoretical knowledge for its own sake. However, I hope to increase the practical value of this dissertation for social movement actors.

constitute elements of the cultural repertoire they draw upon to construct strategies of action (Swidler 1968).

The Relational Exception: Using Field Theory to explain Issue Change

Manuscript I, however, is an exception and breaks with the mechanistic approach. It does so because it explains the activity of issue change itself, thus its antecedents, not its outcomes, contrary to Manuscripts II and III. This focus on issue change's antecedents makes a mechanistic approach unfeasible in Manuscript I, as mechanisms "do not explain the action, they are the action." (Martin 2015: p.73). Activities are part of mechanisms, not their outcomes. Thus, Manuscript I follows a relational approach developing and testing a field theory to explain why SMOs change issues and between which they move (Martin 2003; Martin 2011). In this way, this dissertation takes issue change as bending with the wind and adapting to everchanging environments at face value, as field theory constitutes an ecological approach to action, where the "environment tells [us] what to do" (Martin 2015: p. 242). Yet, Manuscript I stays true to the pragmatist principle. However, it approaches issue change not as a solution to problems but as a problem itself that SMOs need to solve. Having clarified what issue changes are, how to find them, and what this dissertation does and does not do with them, I next turn to data sources used to investigate the antecedents and consequences of issue change.

Data

This dissertation uses two data sources to empirically test its theoretical arguments: the Dynamics of Collective Action and the US Policy Agenda Project. Both data sets are established and widely used in social movement research (e.g., Soule and King 2008; Wang and Soule 2012; Wang and Soule 2016; Wang and Piazza 2016; Wang et al. 2019; Ring-Ramirez and Earl

2021), easing the linkage between this dissertation's findings and recent research on SMOs and social movements. Furthermore, and of particular importance to this dissertation, a mapping key enables me to link information between the two data sets.

Dynamics of Collective Action

The Dynamics of Collective Action (DoCA) is one of social movement research's most established data sets. The DoCA data set includes information on over 23,000 protest events in the United States between 1960 and 1995 that the New York Times had covered. Notably, the data set provides the names of up to four participating SMOs and the raised claims for close to 10,000 protest events. For particular importance of this dissertation, the DoCA includes 4,442 SMOs whose issues I can trace from one protest event to the next, which allows me to adopt a temporal view on issue change, unlike other data sources that use cross-sectional surveys or the names of SMOs to infer their issues.[3]

In particular, the DoCA data set contains 15 issues between which SMOs can move: 'Anti-Nuclear (ANU),' 'Anti-Free Trade (AFT),' 'Women's Rights (FEM),' 'Peace (PEA),' 'Environmental (ENV),' 'African American Civil Rights (AFC),' 'Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights (LGB),' 'Hispanic Civil Rights (HIC),' 'Native American Civil Rights (NAC),' 'Asian American Civil Rights (ASC),' 'Disabled Civil Rights (DIC),' 'Anti-Ethnic/Immigrant (AIE),' 'Pro-Democracy/Human Rights (DHR),' 'Social Welfare (SOW),' and 'Affordable Housing/Homelessness (HOU).'[4]

The DoCA, like any newspaper data set, comes with problems of selection and description bias threatening the validity of my results (Earl et al. 2004; Davenport 2009;

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[3] Note that I use an updated list of the SMOs in DoCA provided by Jennifer Earl as the data set in its original form contains some SMOs multiple times due to typos and changing names available at https://sites.udel.edu/jearl/data-resources.

[4] These issues are not provided by the DoCA data set but by Wang et al. (2019, p. 428), who induced them by applying a community-detection algorithm on a network of claims, with two particular claims sharing a tie if they have jointly occurred at least at one protest event.

Andrews and Caren 2010). Comparing newspaper coverage to a representative sample of protest events, Beyerlein et al. (2018) document that while newspapers' descriptions of protest events tend to be accurate, they are more likely to cover those larger in size, taking place in capitals, and on salient issues. Therefore, I likely underrepresent issue changes at smaller protest events in rural areas that involve less salient issues. However, I argue that these biases do not significantly affect this dissertation's analysis, as changes between salient issues are the most relevant and must occur in larger cities with more significant protests to unfold the proposed consequences for SMOs and social movements.

US Policy Agenda Project

The second data set this dissertation uses is the US Policy Agenda Project (US-PAP) (Baumgartner and Jones 2002). The US-PAP is the oldest of the 28 (inter)national-level data sets that form the Comparative Agendas Project. It systematically documents and provides time-series data on the US government's and media outlets' attention to specific policy issues. The US-PAP includes data sets on the New York Times, congressional hearings, roll call votes, executive orders, and State of the Union speeches, each containing information on the policy issues they discussed since 1947. Crucially, for this dissertation, it is possible to link DoCA's issues to the US-PAP policy issues, enabling me to operationalize the political and media context around particular issues throughout the study period.

A Structural Roadmap

The three manuscripts of this dissertation are independent studies of the antecedents and outcomes of issue change. However, they also intersect, forming a structure resembling the established macro-micro-macro scheme of mechanistic explanations in sociology (e.g.,

Coleman 1986; Hedström and Ylikoski 2010). Here, I briefly outline this structure illustrated in figure 2, hoping to provide a roadmap that guides the reader throughout the dissertation and helps to localize and connect individual findings to the central question of antecedents and consequences of issue change.

The macro-micro-macro scheme consists of three links. The first link (macro → micro) emphasizes how the social situation, thus the macro-level, affects social actors on the micro-level. In this dissertation, the macro → micro link is covered by Manuscript I. Using field theory and longitudinal network models, it shows how environmental factors, on the macro-level, motivate SMOs to conduct different types of issue change on the micro-level. The second link (micro → micro) in the macro-micro-macro scheme captures how social actors – affected by the social situation – act and how these actions, in turn, affect them. Manuscript II of this dissertation covers this micro → micro link. It demonstrates that conducting issue changes improves SMOs' mobilization, coalition-building, and longevity. Finally, the last link (micro → macro) emphasizes how the individual actions, on the micro-level, aggregate, (re)shaping the social situation on the macro-level. Manuscript III covers this last link. It shows how the advantages of issue change for SMOs on the micro-level, especially regarding coalition-building and longevity, enable them to contribute to the cohesion and continuity of social movements on the macro-level.

Taken together, it is possible to summarize the structure of this dissertation in a single sentence: It shows how environmental factors motivate SMOs to conduct issue changes (Manuscript I), which foster the flourishment of SMOs (Manuscript II) and, in turn, the cohesion and continuity of social movements (Manuscript III). Of course, this structure is only a coarse representation of the dissertation's most central elements and the three manuscripts capture far more nuance and noteworthy findings. With this structural roadmap, I continue with a brief summary of the three manuscripts in terms of theory, methods, and results.

Social Movement-Level
(Macro)

Why do SMOs change issues?

<u>Manuscript I</u>

<u>Manuscript III</u>
How does Issue Change affect
Social Movements?

SMO-Level
(Micro)

Manuscript II
How does Issue Change affect SMOs?
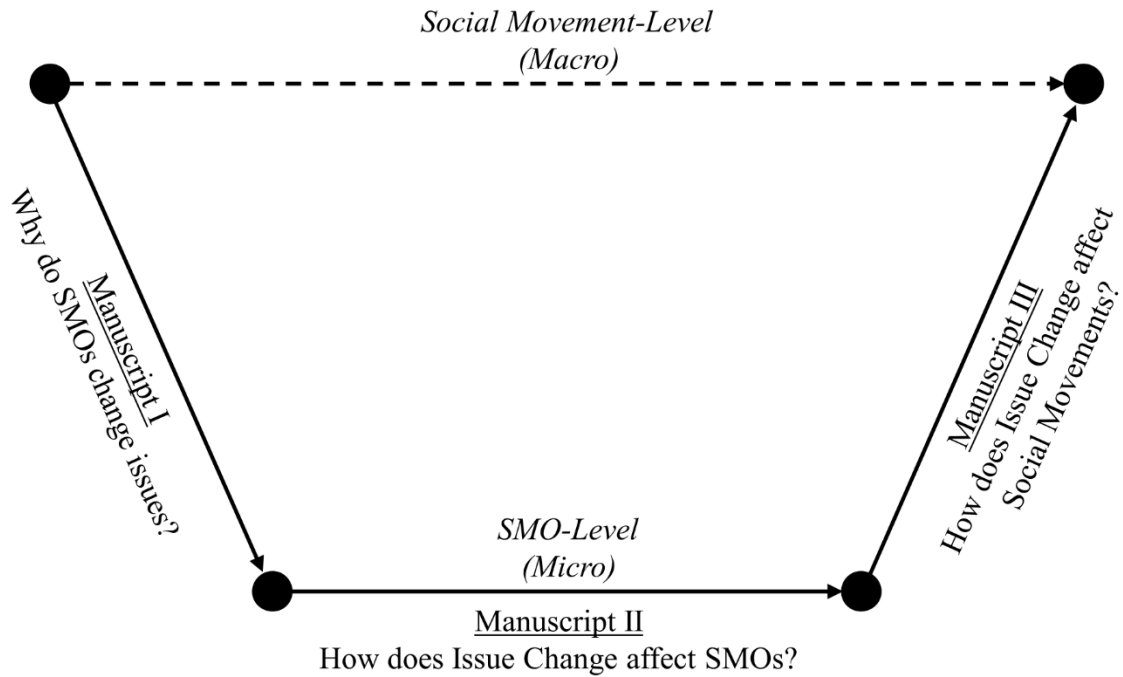
FIG. 2. – Dissertation Structure

The Manuscripts: Theory, Methods, and Results

Manuscript I

In the first manuscript, entitled "Maneuvering the Field of Change: Why Social Movement Organizations Change Their Issues," I carry out multiple tasks. Most importantly, I introduce the previously ignored topic of issue change as a puzzle for social movement research. My central argument for why issue change matters is that it enables SMOs to adapt to their environments and bend with the wind, akin to other already studied types of organizational change (Zald and Ash 1966; Minkoff 1999). If SMOs can adapt via strategy, goal, and tactical change, why not also via issue change? For this claim to have empirical substance, SMOs must

change their issues regularly and strategically. In this first manuscript, I, therefore, shed light on the prevalence and the antecedents of issue change.

The Temporal Typology and Issue Change Dilemma

I begin with defining what issue change is and determine how much nuance this definition requires to be theoretically and analytically fruitful. Therefore, I introduce the temporal typology of issue change outlined earlier in this introductory chapter that consists of four types of issue change: *substitutions*, *diversifications*, *excursions*, and *explorations*. This temporal typology enables me to identify ephemeral issue changes which is necessary for two reasons. First, it is unjustifiable to a priori disregard non-permanent issue changes. Second, I propose that SMOs conduct ephemeral issue changes as a solution to the issue change dilemma. This dilemma frames issue change simultaneously as a solution and problem for SMOs: On the one hand, it might benefit SMOs by enabling them to adapt to everchanging environments. On the other hand, it might harm SMOs by undermining their authenticity (cf. Walker and Stepick 2020; Luna 2017). *Excursions* might be a way for SMOs to balance these prospects and risks of issue change.

A Field Theory of Issue Change

I continue by developing a field theory that explains why SMOs conduct particular types of issue change (cf. Martin 2003; Martin 2015). Here, I take the notion that SMOs must adapt to everchanging environments at face value, as in field theory, the "environment tells [us] what to do" (Martin 2015: p. 242). In particular, I conceptualize issues as field positions, which are constituted vis-à-vis each other by their issue relations, i.e., their proximity content, culture, and status, and issue properties, i.e., bundles of resources, political opportunities, and media attention (cf. Jung et al. 2014). In this social movement field, SMOs occupy particular positions

if they protest for their respective issues. The four types of issue change, then, constitute different ways of moving between positions in the social movement field whose configuration influences how often, why, and which SMOs change their issues. Thus, I argue that SMOs experience the issue relations and properties as forces in the social movement field that motivate and guide their issue changes.

Methods

For the empirical investigation, I implement the temporal typology using the longitudinal information the DoCA provides on 4,442 SMOs in the United States between 1960 and 1995. To test my field theory, I operationalize the social movement field as longitudinal issue change networks, where issues are nodes and movements between issues are directed ties. I construct these issue change networks across multiple periods as the social movement field changes over time and separately for each type of issue change. Applying temporal exponential random graph models (TERGMs; Leifeld et al. 2018), I test whether issue properties and issue relations explain the movement of SMOs between issues, that is, whether they motivate and guide issue changes.

Results

I find that SMOs do change issues regularly but not excessively. *Excursions* were the most prevalent type of issue change, followed by *diversifications*, *substitutions*, and *explorations*. Although issue changes occurred between all social movements, the majority took place between a few larger social movements. Younger, smaller, and weakly embedded SMOs tended to change issues more than their older, larger, and well-embedded counterparts. They also conducted all types of issue change. In contrast, older, larger, and well-embedded SMOs seemed restricted to only conducting *excursions*.

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Supporting the field theory, the TERGMs revealed three general motivations for four types of issue change, namely the avoidance of resource competition, the effort to save costs and minimize authenticity harm, and the exploitation of short-term political opportunities. Particular motivations for each issue change type also became evident. *Substitutions* were motivated by questions of what to do next after experiencing success or failure. *Diversifications,* in contrast*,* were conducted to increase political attention by linking issues to other issues currently having policy attention. *Excursions* were motivated by efforts to support other social movements, status improvement, or reconnecting to the grassroots. Only for *explorations* were no particular motivations revealed.

In sum, these results suggest that issue change is central to SMOs with its antecedents located in their environments. The configuration of the social movement field motivates and guides the issue changes of SMOs. These antecedents, however, differed between issue change types, emphasizing their strategic dimensions. Likewise, SMOs primarily conducted *excursions*, presumably as a solution to the issue change dilemma between the benefits of adaptation and the loss of authenticity. The finding that younger, smaller, and weakly embedded SMOs are more likely to (radically) change issues than their older, larger, and well-embedded counterparts suggests organizational inertia effects and different purposes of issue change for upcoming and established SMOs. Upcoming SMOs change their issues, even radically, to find their niche and survive, whereas established SMOs conduct subtle issue changes to ensure success.

Manuscript II

The second manuscript, "Paving the Way to WUNC: How Social Movement Organizations thrive through Issue Change," continues where the first manuscript left off. It builds on the finding that SMOs change issues and asks whether issue change benefits or harms SMOs'

mobilization, coalition-building, and longevity, empirically testing the issue change dilemma. These three outcomes are also vital for SMOs to become WUNC, i.e., 'Worthy,' 'Numerous,' United,' and 'Committed,' which is crucial for success (Tilly 1994; Wouters and Walgrave 2017; Fassiotto and Soule 2017; Wouters 2019; Bailey et al. 2023). In the second manuscript, the analytical lens therefore moves from the antecedents to the outcomes of issue change on the micro-level.

Adaptation and Crafting Hybrid Identities

I propose and test two mechanisms via which issue change affects the mobilization, coalition-building, and longevity of SMOs, namely adaptation and crafting hybrid identities (cf. Heaney and Rojas 2014). The adaptation mechanism suggests that issue change enables SMOs to adapt to the changing interests of protestors, other SMOs, and funders – thus, the relevant audiences for mobilization, coalition-building, and longevity, respectively. By adaptation, issue change helps SMOs to appeal to these audiences, improving their ability to mobilize, build coalitions, and survive. In contrast, adaptation efforts could also harm SMOs by hurting their authenticity and alienating protestors, other SMOs, and funders.

The crafting hybrid identities mechanism states that issue change enables SMOs to start protesting for multiple issues. These hybrid identities make SMOs appealing to protestors with intersectional identities and other SMOs across social movement boundaries, fostering their mobilization and coalition-building. In contrast, crafting hybrid identities is likely to hurt the chances of survival of SMOs. These differences likely result from the fact that hybrid identities will likely solve problems of protestors and other SMOs, i.e., resonance with personal identity and program alignment (Brooker and Meyer 2018; Snow et al. 1986), but worsen those of funders, i.e., finding SMOs matching a funding profile and promising measurable impact (Bartely 2007; McCarthy 2004; Bothwell 2001).

Methods

I use regression models with two-way fixed effects to assess the total effect of each issue change type on mobilization, coalition-building, and longevity. To further disentangle and test the two mechanisms of adaptation and crafting hybrid identities, I rely on mediation analysis (Imai et al. 2010; Makovi and Winship 2021). In particular, I decompose the total effects of each issue change type into a direct effect, testing the adaptation mechanism, and an indirect effect, testing the crafting hybrid identities mechanism.

Results

I find that issue change positively affects the mobilization, coalition-building, and survival chances of SMOs. However, these positive effects mainly occurred for *diversification* and *excursions*, while *substitutions* and *explorations* mostly showed neither positive nor negative effects. Furthermore, the mediation analyses provided evidence for the adaptation and crafting hybrid identities mechanisms. However, the two mechanisms work differently across issue change types and outcomes. The adaptation mechanism yields positive returns on all three outcomes but only for *diversifications* and *excursions*. In contrast, the crafting hybrid identities mechanism showed the same effect pattern for each issue change type. However, its effects differed between outcomes, affecting mobilization and coalition-building positively but longevity negatively.

In sum, these results suggest that SMOs thrive via issue change. However, only if issue changes do not alter them radically, as in the case of *diversifications* and *excursions*. In contrast, the null effects of the more radical *substitutions* and *explorations* simultaneously provide evidence for the issue change dilemma but also reduce its severeness. Although they suggest that radical issue change harms the authenticity of SMOs, this authenticity loss does not hurt

them. However, even if punishment is absent, the absence of incentives might deter SMOs from conducting issue changes.

Manuscript III

The third manuscript, "Cohesion and Continuity: Issue-changing SMOs as Presevers, Integrators, and Generational Brokers," continues investigating the consequences of issue change. However, it shifts the focus from the micro to the macro-level, investigating how issue change affects the cohesion and continuity of social movements. Both outcomes are vital for social movements but also hard to achieve due to the high turnover rates of SMOs. Building on the findings from the second manuscript, Manuscript III investigates whether issue-changing SMOs, due to their coalition-building skills and longevity, contribute to the cohesion and continuity of social movements as preserves, integrators, and generational brokers.[5] Thus, in the third manuscript, I investigate the consequences of issue change has for social movements.

Preservers, Integrators and Generational Brokers

I suggest three mechanisms via which issue-changing SMOs contribute to the cohesion and continuity of social movements, namely preserving, integration, and generational brokerage. The preserving mechanism suggests that issue-changing SMOs, due to the mere fact of their longevity, contribute to the continuity of social movements by preserving social movement culture. The integration mechanism lays out how issue-changing SMOs contribute to the cohesion of social movements. It suggests that issue-changing SMOs, due to their longevity and coalition-building skills, will likely have positions at the center of social movements into which they integrate newcomer SMOs. At last, the generational brokerage mechanism suggests

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[5] Note that Manuscript III only considers *diversifications* and *excursions* as *substitutions* and *explorations* imply leaving social movements.

that issue-changing SMOs can form relationships with SMOs from different generations, i.e., with non-overlapping lifespans, establishing channels between them that enable otherwise impossible transmission and preservation of social movement culture.

Methods

I use fixed effects regression models to test the two continuity mechanisms of preservation and generational brokerage. For the preservation mechanism, I use linear models to test whether issue-changing SMOs positively affect the degree of tactical preservation in social movements. Using fixed-effects binomial regression, I test whether conducting issue changes increases SMOs' opportunities to engage in generational brokerage measured by the number of partners with non-overlapping lifespans.

To test the cohesion mechanism of integration, I use counterfactual network simulations (cf. Hillmann 2021). In particular, I construct coalition networks for 15 social movements, assessing their cohesion via established network statistics. Then, I remove the issue-changing SMOs from these networks to test whether cohesion is lower in the counterfactual than in the original networks. Finally, I construct confidence intervals by removing SMOs randomly many times to ensure that decreased cohesion after removing issue-changing SMOs is not the product of chance.

Results

I find support for all three mechanisms for both *diversifications* and *excursions*. The linear models showed that the presence of issue-changing SMOs positively affected tactical preservation in SMOs. This effect, however, is conditional on sufficiently high turnover rates in the SMO population. Issue-changing SMOs are also more likely to have opportunities to engage in generational brokerage, as negative binomial regression revealed. They also

contribute significantly and considerably to the cohesion of social movements. The counterfactual network simulations revealed tremendously lower levels of cohesion in the counterfactual than in the original networks. Additional analysis also shows that issue-changing SMOs are far more likely to hold positions in the center of social movements than their non-changing counterparts. In sum, these results suggest that issue-changing SMOs contribute to the cohesion and continuity of social movements as preserves, integrators, and generational brokers. Thus, issue change positively affects SMOs on the micro-level and social movements on the macro-level.

Discussion

Throughout this dissertation, I have shed light on the previously neglected topic of issue change of SMOs. Therefore, I developed a temporal typology of issue change consisting of four types: *substitutions*, *diversifications*, *excursions*, and *explorations*. Using this temporal typology, I investigate the antecedents and consequences of issue change using relational analysis and strategies of mechanism discovery. In particular, I developed a field theory to explain why and between which issues SMOs move. Furthermore, I outlined a variety of mechanisms explaining how issue change affects SMOs and social movements. Using the Dynamics of Collective Action and the US Policy Agenda Project, I provided empirical evidence supporting these theoretical claims, applying a wide variety of statistical social network analysis and regression techniques. In this section, I summarize this dissertation's central findings, its contributions, and limitations.

Findings

The Prevalence and Dilemma of Issue Change

In terms of prevalance, I find that SMOs in the United States between 1960 and 1995 conducted issue change regularly but not excessively. Although SMOs moved between all 15 social movements, revealing inter-movement dependency, most issue changes occurred between a few larger social movements. *Excursions* were the most prevalent issue change type, followed by *diversifications*, *substitutions*, and *explorations*. Their prevalence thus followed their radicality, i.e., how much they alter SMOs' programs, because of the dilemma SMOs face when changing issues. On the one hand, issue change might benefit SMOs by enabling them to adapt to changing environments. On the other hand, issue change might harm SMOs by undermining their authenticity. The more radical issue changes are SMOs are less likely to experience issue change's benefits but to suffer its harms, and vice versa.

The Antecedents of Issue Change

To investigate antecedents of issue change, I developed and tested a field theory to explain why SMOs conduct issue changes and between which they move. Applying TERGMs to longitudinal issue change networks, operationalizing the social movement field, revealed that SMOs had a variety of motivations to conduct issue change. Some general and others specific to particular issue change types. The general motivations for issue change were avoiding resource competition, minimizing implementation costs and authenticity loss, and exploiting short-term political opportunities. In particular, *substitutions* were motivated by previous success or failure, *diversifications* by gaining political attention, and *excursions* by efforts to support other movements, status improvement, and reconnecting to the grassroots. Only *explorations* had no particular motivation beyond the general ones. These results support the

proposed field theory demonstrating that the issue changes of SMOs were motivated and guided by the configuration of the social movement field and its forces constituted by issue properties, i.e., bundles of resources, political opportunities, and media attention, and relations, i.e., their proximity in content, culture, and status.

However, organizational-level factors also mattered. Younger, smaller, and weakly embedded SMOs were more likely to change issues than their older, larger, and well-embedded counterparts. Furthermore, while the former tended to conduct each type of issue change, the latter primarily conducted *excursions*. These results show the effects of organizational inertia and different purposes of issue change for established and upcoming SMOs, i.e., fostering success and finding their niche.

The Consequences of Issue Change

To shed light on the consequences of issue change, I outlined and provided empirical support for various mechanisms via which issue change contributed to the flourishing of SMOs and social movements. On the SMO level, I used longitudinal regression and mediation analysis to show that conducting issue changes improves SMOs' mobilization, coalition-building, and longevity. Two distinct mechanisms produced these positive effects, namely adaptation and the crafting of hybrid identities. Adaptation enables SMOs to adapt to audiences' interests relevant for mobilization, coalition-building, and survival, i.e., protestors, other SMOs, and funders. Empirically, the adaptation mechanism yielded positive returns for non-radical issue change, i.e., *excursions* and *diversifications*, and no returns for radical issue changes, i.e., *substitutions* and *explorations*. Thus, issue changes benefit SMOs via adaptation as long as they are not overly radical, undermining their authenticity. These results also empirically support the relevance of the issue change dilemma.

The crafting hybrid identities mechanism suggests that issue change enables SMOs to start protesting for multiple issues, appealing to protestors with intersectional identities and SMOs across movement boundaries. Longevity, however, should be negatively affected. These expected differences result from the fact that SMOs' hybrid identities are likely to ease problems of protestors and other SMOs, i.e., resonance with personal identity and program alignment, but worsen those of funders, i.e., finding an SMO matching their funding profile, promising a measurable impact. The empirical results supported these expectations, revealing that crafting hybrid identities via issue change (regardless of type) positively affected mobilization and coalition-building but harmed SMOs' survival chances. In sum, these results suggest that issue change turns SMOs into long-lived, skillful coalition-builders and mobilizers.

On the social movement level, I showed that issue-changing SMOs, i.e., those conducting *diversifications* and *contributions*, contribute to the cohesion and continuity of social movements. They make these contributions by acting as integrators, preservers, and generational brokers. As integrators, issue-changing SMOs contribute to the cohesion of social movements by occupying positions in the center of social movements into which they integrate newly founded SMOs by forming relationships with them. As preservers, they preserve social movement culture from protest cycle to protest cycle, which they can do because of their longevity. Lastly, as generational brokers, issue-changing SMOs contribute to the continuity of social movements by forming relationships with SMOs from different generations, constituting indirect channels for transmitting social movement culture between them. Longitudinal regression analysis and counterfactual network simulations supported all three mechanisms. They further suggested that issue-changing SMOs can fulfill these roles due to their longevity and coalition-building skills. Thus, these results suggest that issue change also contributes to the flourishing of social movements.

Contributions

The central contribution of this dissertation is putting issue change on the map of social movement research. Throughout this dissertation, it became evident that issue change is conducted strategically by SMOs and has empirical consequences for important outcomes, e.g., mobilization or cohesion. In light of these findings, social movement theory can no longer collectively ignore issue change. It needs to become part of social movement scholars' sociological imagination and toolkit and put on an equal footing with other types of organizational change, e.g., tactical or strategic. Issue change is an important part of SMOs' agency, and no amount of metaphysical pathos should make us dismiss it. If there is one central takeaway of this dissertation, it is this. However, this dissertation also makes other no less important contributions, which I discuss in the following, organized into three categories: theoretical, conceptual, and methodological.

Theoretical

Unsurprisingly, most theoretical contributions of this dissertation center around issue change. Most importantly, this dissertation provides theoretical tools to understand issue change's antecedents and outcomes. In particular, I developed an empirically supported field theory explaining why SMOs conduct issue changes, contributing to field theory's recently growing prominence in social movement research (e.g., McAdam and Fligstein 2012; Jung et al. 2014; Wang et al. 2019; Gold and Mische 2024). Furthermore, I outlined multiple mechanisms via which issue change produces positive returns on important social movement outcomes. On the SMO level, these mechanisms are adaptation and crafting hybrid identities and preservation, integration, and generational brokerage on the level of social movements. Importantly, these mechanisms played out differently for different issue change types and outcomes, implying variability that should enable transfer to other contexts and the specification of scope conditions

in the future. The last theoretical contribution regarding issue change is the dilemma between the need for adaptation and the threat of authenticity loss. Its theoretical value lies in putting the two needs of adaptability (e.g., Zald and Ash 1966; Powell and Friedkin 1987; Minkoff 1999) and authenticity (e.g., Walker and Stepick 2020; Luna 2017) that SMOs have into a dialogue, making their tension visible and accessible for theorizing. Furthermore, since this dilemma likely reflects the typical situation SMOs and other organizations face when pursuing change, it is likely helpful in understanding organizational change generally.

Another theoretical contribution this dissertation makes is offering a solution to the puzzle of why hybridization benefits SMOs in some circumstances, e.g., mobilization (Heaney and Rojas 2014) or coalition-building (Van Dyke 2003; Borland 2008), while harming them in others, e.g., survival (Olzak and Johnson 2019; Olzak 2022) and socio-political legitimacy (Wang et al. 2019). In particular, I have proposed and demonstrated that whether hybridization affects SMOs positively or negatively depends on whether it supports or hinders relevant audiences in solving the problems when pursuing their goals. Thus, it may be less about how strong or weak categorical boundaries are and more about whether they are relevant to the evaluating audience (cf. Martin 2011; Zuckerman 2017).

Conceptual

This dissertation also makes two significant conceptual contributions. The first is the introduction of the temporal typology of issue change, consisting of four types, namely *substitutions*, *diversifications*, *excursions*, and *explorations*. This temporal typology captures two non-permanent types of issue change, i.e., *excursions* and *explorations*, in addition to the two permanent types usually considered, i.e., *substitutions* and *diversifications*. It, therefore, enables social movement researchers to identify and analyze a wider variety of issue changes, especially those that are more subtle and ephemeral. Furthermore, the processual ontology

underlying this temporal typology transcends the assumptions that organizational change is a point-in-time event and only meaningful if permanent (cf. Albert and Whetten 1985; Reger et al. 1994). Instead, understanding organizational change as a process that is unfolding over time and may be non-permanent can yield valuable insights, particularly in contexts that so far overlooked ephemeral change.

The second conceptual contribution is the idea of generational brokerage. In this dissertation, I developed this concept to refer to the ability of issue-changing SMOs to establish indirect channels between SMOs from different generations, i.e., with non-overlapping lifespans. However, the concept is applicable in any context where temporal barriers prohibit connections between social actors. To understand its essence, a comparison with structural brokerage is useful: while structural brokers bridge structural holes, generational brokers bridge temporal holes in a network. Thus, generational brokerage also implies an interplay of networks and time that is far more complex than the simple formation and dissolving of ties. In particular, it suggests that network structure not only changes over time but also has an inherent temporal dimension. Thus, generational brokerage is a promising concept worth further development and application across contexts.

Methodological

Lastly, this dissertation also makes a methodological contribution, which is using statistical network analysis not only to map out a social field but to quantify its effect and, thus, the forces within it. The usual argument against this strategy to test field theory is that fields are not reducible to relations between actors but also consist of "cultural conceptions of power, privileges, resources, rules, and so on that shape action" (Fligstein and McAdam 2012: 30). In principle, I agree with this statement: A field is not fully captured by a set of relations. However, the conclusion that statistical network analysis is, therefore, inappropriate to test field theory

because they do not represent it in its entirety is not valid. Statistical models do not need to be exact representations of theories; they only need to be capable of testing those theories' empirical implications. We also do not reject the use of linear regression models to estimate the effects of education on employees' wages, even though they do not capture the complexity of labor market theories. The critique further misses that a field's cultural conceptions can be incorporated into statistical network models, akin to covariates in a regression model. In this dissertation, for instance, I modeled proximity in culture and status between positions in the social movement field as edge covariates in TERGMs. Most importantly, these TERGMs produced results that enabled me to assess my field theory. Thus, I hope to have demonstrated that statistical network analysis can test the empirical implications of field theory.

Limitations

In closing, I would like to point out the limitations of this dissertation, which open avenues for future work. First, using the DoCA data as my primary data source led to several data limitations. Although it enabled me to trace the issue changes of SMOs and test my arguments, it is fundamentally a protest event, not an SMO data set. It, therefore, lacks relevant details about SMOs that would have been informative to understand issue change, e.g., age, size, degree of professionalization, or available resources. Even though I used multiple proxies, the lack of this information severely limited the attention I could pay to internal SMO processes relevant to issue change. In particular, I was unable to investigate the *how* of issue change, i.e., how SMOs start considering issue change, debating it internally, making the decision, and implementing it. However, this internal process is no less important than the investigated antecedents and outcomes of issue change and future research should shed light on *how* SMOs change their issues.

Second, I did not have direct measures for a few important concepts, especially authenticity and audience interests. In both cases, I relied on stylized assumptions to capture them by their effects. While this strategy proved productive, it only allowed a general approximation of how authenticity and external audiences affect issue change, falling short of capturing their richness and nuance. Thus, future research should investigate the relationship between issue change, authenticity, and external audiences in-depth.

Finally, I developed many novel concepts and ways of operationalization. Although this is a central contribution of this dissertation, not using established concepts and measures has the downside of introducing uncertainty. Different ways other than mine to operationalize concepts, such as cohesion, continuity, or generational brokerage, exist and possibly affect their relationship with issue change. Hence, caution is warranted, and future research should work on triangulating the results of this dissertation with different data and measures. However, despite these limitations, this dissertation makes a first productive step toward a fruitful investigation of issue change in social movement research.

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Maneuvering the Field of Change: Why Social Movement Organizations Change Their Issues

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Abstract: Social movement organizations must change to flourish. While social movement research has shown that these organizations change tactics or (de)radicalize, it has neglected issue change. Using data from the Dynamics of Collective Action and Policy Agenda Projects, I propose and test a field theory that explains how often, why, and which social movement organizations change issues. Analyzing the trajectories of 4,442 US social movement organizations between 1960 and 1995, I show that issue change is nurturing but uncommon due to a dilemma between the need for adaptation and authenticity. Applying longitudinal network models to issue change networks, I show that properties and relations between issues constitute field forces that motivate and guide issue changes. Finally, social movement organizations' susceptibility to change issues in response to these field forces depends on their characteristics. These results underscore the importance of issue change for the viability and strategic operation of social movement organizations.

Introduction

In January 1991, *Greenpeace U.S.A.* was in crisis. Decreasing membership figures and declining business donations during the recession led to budget cuts, forcing the organization to close offices and lay off ten percent of its staff. Downsizing, however, was not the only response of the environmental group. *Greenpeace U.S.A.*, which until then had only worked for environmental protection, also changed what it was protesting for. In the same month, *the organization* began to join protests against the Gulf War, which had surpassed environmentalism as salient political issue and mobilized tens of thousands in opposition.

Greenpeace U.S.A. survived, but crises of this nature are not uncommon for social movement organizations (SMOs). Social, political, and cultural change generally happens slowly, and SMOs need to survive for prolonged periods while facing resistance from enemies and everchanging environments (Minkoff 1993; Tilly, Castañeda, and Wood 2020, p. 14f.). Social movement theory argues that SMOs need what *Greenpeace U.S.A.* had demonstrated: the ability to "bend with the wind," that is, to adapt to changing circumstances to ensure their survival and success (Zald and Ash 1966; Powell and Friedkin 1987; Minkoff 1999; Gawerc 2015). Understanding how SMOs change is therefore crucial to ensuring continued social progress, as they form the backbone of social movements securing resources, transferring knowledge, and mobilizing protestors (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Wang, Piazza, and Soule 2018).[1]

Since Zald and Ash (1966) introduced the question of organizational change in SMOs, empirical research in this domain has mainly fallen in one of two categories, focusing either on tactical change (e.g., McAdam 1983; Staggenborg 1988; Voss and Sherman 2000; McCammon et al. 2008; Wang and Soule 2012; Wang and Soule 2016) or on the (de)radicalization of social

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[1] I define SMOs as formal organizations embedded in and working for the goals of social movements (McCarthy & Zald 1973), which are series of contentious displays of campaigns, repertoires, and WUNC displays of actors working towards social change (Tilly et al. 2020).

movements in pursuit of their current goals (e.g., Messinger 1955; Helfgot 1974; Piven and Cloward 1977; Meyer and Tarrow 1998). In contrast, the question of when and how SMOs change their issues, i.e., what they are protesting for, has been largely overlooked. That is surprising as issue change is another effective way for SMOs to adapt to changing environmental conditions as *Greenpeace U.S.A.'s* engagement against the Gulf War demonstrates.

Over the last years, however, issue change has started to incite the interest of social movement scholars (see Larson 2009; Wang, Soule, and Rao 2019; Ring-Ramirez and Earl 2021). Larson (2009) documents a low level of change in the issues, tactics, and targets of SMOs in Seattle between 1999 and 2005. Wang et al. (2019) demonstrate that SMOs tend to borrow claims from social movements with high levels of cohesion to improve their socio-political legitimacy. Most recently, Ring-Ramirez and Earl (2021) show that issues are more likely to spill over, i.e., co-occur more frequently, between social movements that are culturally similar but differ in status. While these previous studies have provided initial knowledge about issue change, a systematic overview of the prevalence and motivations for issue change still needs to be provided. In this article, I therefore address the following questions: (1) How prevalent are issue changes, and in which ways do SMOs change issues? (2) Why do SMOs undertake issue changes, and what makes them change between particular issues? (3) Which SMOs undertake issue changes, and in which ways?

To answer these questions, I propose a field theory of issue change following the recent surge of applying field theory in social movement research (Diani and McAdam 2003; Jung, King, and Soule 2014; Larson and Lizardo 2019; Wang et al. 2019; Gold and Mische 2024; cf. Martin 2003). Field theory is particularly useful in explaining issue change as adaptations to an everchanging environment because it allows me to reconstruct this environment and how SMOs, i.e., their decision-makers, experience them. At the core of my field theory, I conceptualize issues as field positions that SMOs occupy in the social movement field and issue

change as movement between those field positions. These field positions are constituted vis-à-vis each other regarding their issue relations in content, culture, and status (Jung et al. 2014). Moreover, field positions have different issue properties, i.e., resources, political opportunities, and media attention. Based on these conceptualizations, I make three particular arguments to answer my research questions.

First, to answer how often and in which ways SMOs change issues, I argue that SMOs face a dilemma when changing issues, which constrains them in whether and how they can move in the social movement field. In particular, the dilemma that SMOs face is between the necessity to adapt and risking authenticity when changing their issues, explaining the low prevalence of issue changes in previous studies (e.g., Larson 2009). This dilemma, however, I argue is more or less pronounced depending on how much issue changes alter what SMOs do and which SMOs may overcome by undertaking ephemeral issue changes. Therefore, I develop a temporal typology consisting of four types that differ in radicalness and permanence and constitute different ways of moving in the social movement field: *substitutions*, *diversifications*, *excursions*, and *explorations*.

Second, to answer why and between which issues SMOs change, I argue that what SMOs, i.e., their decision-makers, experience and adapt to in the social movement field are the issue properties and issue relations of field positions. Thus, issue properties and issue relations constitute field forces that motivate and guide issue changes, i.e., influencing between which issues SMOs move (cf. Martin 2011). Hence, when SMOs change issues, they do not passively bend with the wind but maneuver strategically in the social movement field to gather and exploit the means, i.e., resources, political opportunities, and media attention, for their survival and success while considering the relative positioning, i.e., content, culture, and status, of issues in the field.

At last, to answer which SMOs change issues, I build on the general property of field theories that the susceptibility of elements to field forces depends on their characteristics (cf.

Martin 2011). Hence, I argue that SMOs are more or less susceptible to the forces in the social movement field depending on their organizational characteristics, i.e., their age, size, and coalition partners, and, therefore, more or less likely to undertake issue changes or change in specific ways.

I test my field theory using data from the Dynamics of Collective Action (DoCA) Project and the US Policy Agenda Project (US – PAP) in a three-part analysis. First, to test whether understanding the issue change dilemma helps explain how often and in which ways SMOs change issues, I provide a descriptive overview of how and to what extent 4,442 SMOs in the United States changed their issues between 1960 and 1995. In general, issue changes of all four types are uncommon, but some are more prevalent than others, depending on how much they alter SMOs and their implementation costs. Together, these results support the argument that issue change is uncommon due to the dilemma that SMOs face between the necessity to adapt and risking their authenticity, which constrains them in whether and how they can move in the social movement field.

Second, to test whether issue properties and issue relations motivate and guide issue changes, I build on the fact that issue change is the mobility of SMOs between issues and on the recent development to conceptualize and analyze mobility tables as networks (Windzio 2018; Cheng and Park 2020; Lin and Hung 2022). In particular, I operationalize the social movement field as longitudinal issue change networks, where issues are nodes and movements between issues are directed ties. I construct these issue change networks across multiple periods as the social movement field changes over time and separately for each type of issue change as they reflect different ways of moving in the social movement field. To these longitudinal issue change networks, I apply temporal exponential random graph models (TERGM) to examine whether issue properties and issue relations explain the movement of SMOs between issues, i.e., whether they motivate and guide issue changes. In line with my field theory, the TERGMs reveal that three issue properties and issue relations provide general motivations and directions

when SMOs undertake any type of issue change. These general motivations are the avoidance of resource competition, the reduction of implementation costs and harm to authenticity, and the exploitation of short-term political opportunities. However, particular motivations beyond these general ones also exist for each type of issue change.

At last, to test whether SMOs' susceptibility to field forces depends on their organizational characteristics, I compare SMOs undertaking these four types of issue changes in terms of their age, size, and coalition partners. Indeed, issue changes are primarily undertaken by young, small, and weakly embedded SMOs, regardless of type. If older, larger, and well-embedded SMOs undertake issue changes, they almost exclusively undertake *excursions*.

In this article, I make several contributions to the literature on social movements, organizations, and politics. To the social movement literature, I provide the first systemic overview of the prevalence, origins and destinations, and organizational correlates of issue change. Further, I propose a field theory that can explain how often, why, and which SMOs change issues and constitutes an actor-level counterpart that complements existing work on field-level dynamics in the social movement field (e.g., Jung et al. 2014). To the organizational literature, I contribute a temporal typology of issue change that goes beyond the usual distinction between *substitutions* and *diversifications* and is transferable, in principle, to any other type of organizational change. Moreover, my conceptualization of organizational change as a dilemma between survival benefits and authenticity harm does provide new insights for the recently growing scholarship on authenticity in organizations (e.g., Kovács, Carroll, and Lehman 2014; Verhaal, Hoskins, and Lundmark 2017; Radoynovska and Ruttan 2023). Finally, my findings regarding the motivations behind issue change inform research on other political entities that also change issues, such as political parties and politicians (e.g., Sides 2006; Spoon and Klüver 2014; Ennser-Jedenastik et al. 2022).

In the remainder of this article, I develop my field theory and three interrelated arguments about issue change in more detail and derive empirical expectations. Then, I

introduce the DoCA and US – PAP data sets, the operationalization of variables, and the methodology I apply to answer my research questions. Afterward, I convey descriptive results in the form of frequency statistics and visualizations as well as the explanatory results from the TERGMs. Lastly, I end with a conclusion and discussion of my empirical findings and their implications for my theoretical reasonings, alongside limitations and possibilities for future research.

A Field Theory of Issue Change

To take the premise that issue change is a way for SMOs to adapt to an everchanging environment at face value, I propose a field theory to explain how often, why, and which SMOs change their issues. Field theory is particularly useful for this purpose as it allows me to reconstruct this environment and how SMOs, i.e., their decision-makers, experience it (cf. Martin 2011). In particular, I argue that this environment is the social movement field which consists of various positions that are issues (Jung et al. 2014; Larson and Lizardo 2019; Wang et al. 2019). These field positions are constituted vis-à-vis each other by issue relations, i.e., their proximity in content, culture, and status, and have associated issue properties, i.e., bundles of resources, political opportunities, and media attention. In this social movement field, SMOs occupy particular field positions by protesting for specific issues. Thus, I argue that issue change is a movement between positions in the social movement field whose configuration influences how often, why, and which SMOs change their issues. In the upcoming sections, I develop three interrelated arguments about how exactly the configuration of the social movement field influences issue change in these regards and derive testable empirical expectations for my empirical analysis.

The Prevalence and Types of Issue Change

If issue change is beneficial for SMOs, why do studies find so little of it (e.g., Larson 2009)? Any theory of issue change, first and foremost, must account for this fact. In this section, I examine how the benefits and risks of issue change constrain SMOs' movement in the social movement field and develop a temporal typology of issue change that are different types of moving to explain how often and in what ways SMOs change their issues.

The Dilemma of Issue Change

Issue changes are not only likely to have benefits but also imply considerable risks. Beginning with the advantages of issue change, I argue that SMOs not only need to adapt to their environments. SMOs must also be perceived as 'worthy,' 'unified,' 'numerous,' and 'committed' (WUNC) by relevant audiences for success (Tilly 1994). Being WUNC increases SMOs' socio-political legitimacy (Bailey et al. 2023) and the chances that policymakers act on their demands (Fassiotto and Soule 2017; Wouters and Walgrave 2017). Here, my argument is that issue changes can improve two dimensions of WUNC. SMOs can use issue changes to craft what Heaney and Rojas (2014) term 'hybrid identities,' i.e., that an SMOs protests for multiple issues, which foster mobilization (Heaney and Rojas 2014) and coalition-building (van Dyke 2003; Borland 2008). Hybrid identities crafted via issue change, therefore, can improve two dimensions of WUNC, namely being perceived as 'unified (with others)' and 'numerous.'[2]

Despite these advantages, issue change and hybrid identities are also risky for SMOs. The reasons are threefold. First, holding hybrid identities can negatively affect the survival chances of SMOs (Olzak and Johnson 2019), as can strategy changes (Minkoff 1999). Second,

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[2] Note that issue change can also make SMOs appear less unified when causing internal conflict. However, I argue that this is only the case when an issue change is not successful. If an issue change is successful, i.e., a vast majority of SMO members agree with the new issues, the ability to change issues in unity is likely to make SMOs perceived as more unified.

undertaking issue changes is likely to raise doubts about the 'commitment' of SMOs to their goals, harming a dimension of WUNC and their authenticity, i.e., whether they are perceived as legitimate to talk about and represent their issues (Luna 2017; Walker and Stepick 2020). Lastly, SMOs are likely to face an identity constraint of their members resisting issue change (cf. Abbott 2016, p. 13). That is because the issues of SMOs are likely to be closely tied to the personal identities and ideologies of their members, which constitute the motivational core of SMOs shaping their goals (Snow and Benford 1988; Gould 1995; Polletta and Jasper 2001; Heaney and Rojas 2014). Therefore, it is unreasonable, if not paradoxical, to expect SMOs to change their issues frequently and in severe manners to survive or be successful. Such issue changes would fundamentally obscure what SMOs, and especially their members, want to achieve and why SMOs want to maintain themselves.

Hence, issue change confronts SMOs with a dilemma. On the one hand, issue change can be useful for SMOs to gather and exploit resources and to improve two dimensions of WUNC, namely being 'unified' and 'numerous' via crafting hybrid identities that foster mobilization and coalition-building. On the other hand, issue change can also harm SMOs by decreasing survival chances and raising doubts about their authenticity and 'commitment,' harming another crucial dimension of WUNC. Facing this dilemma, the question is, what can SMOs do to solve or at least mitigate this problem?

I argue that SMOs can solve the dilemma they face by undertaking issue changes that are temporary, like the Brazilian Youth Activists in Ann Mische's (2009) work, who temporarily switch between their multiple identities to enable collaboration between activist groups. These ephemeral issue changes enable SMOs to craft temporary hybrid identities that allow them to exploit their short-term advantages, thus fostering mobilization and coalition-building at particular or a sequence of protest events. At the same time, because they are only temporary, they offset the potential long-term harms of issue change of decreased survival chances, doubts about 'commitment' and authenticity, and are less restricted by any identity constraint. In this

sense, undertaking ephemeral issue changes could be a practice that SMOs use to solve the dilemma of issue change (cf. Gross 2009).[3]

A Temporal Typology of Issue Changes

Previous research on issue change in SMOs has focused only on two permanent types (e.g., Ring-Ramirez and Earl 2021*).*[4] These two issue change types are *substitutions*, i.e., "when one identity (is) giving way to another," and *diversifications*, i.e., "when one identity (is) joining another" (Gioia et al. 2013, p. 133; Albert and Whetten 1985). However, I argue that devoting systematic attention to ephemeral issue changes is necessary to take the assumption of SMOs strategically bending with the wind at face value. One should have concepts and instruments available that are attentive to even seemingly minor maneuvers. If SMOs also use ephemeral issue changes to maneuver strategically in the social movement field, a binary distinction between *substitutions* and *diversifications* would be empirically insufficient.

Take, as an illustrative example, the SMO *Committee for Freedom Now*, which was active between 1963 and 1965. Having started to protest for 'African American Civil Rights' in 1963, the SMO decided to drop their initial issue and protest for 'Pro-Democracy/Human Rights' after a few months. Under the assumption that issue change takes place at one point in time, this would constitute a *substitution*. Crucially, however, the *Committee for Freedom Now* did not protest for 'Pro-Democracy/Human Rights' for long but quickly abandoned it and returned to 'African American Civil Rights.' Thus, an issue change that initially looked like a

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[3] Another conceivable solution to the dilemma of issue change could be to disband and found a new SMO dedicated to a new issue. However, this is unlikely to work. Disbanding and re-founding an SMO is likely more costly than any issue change and risks losing viable relationships with policymakers, the media, allies, and even the SMO's members. Even if relationships are preserved, the harm to authenticity might be as severe as for the most radical issue changes.

[4] Likewise, other studies that deal with concepts close to what I call ephemeral issue changes use terms other than issue change for them, such as "issue bricolage" (Jung et al. 2014) or "issue borrowing" (Wang et al. 2019).

substitution is better described as an *excursion*, i.e., a short-time visit in an issue new for the SMO before returning to its initial issues.[5]

To overcome these shortcomings, I develop a temporal typology of issue changes capable of also capturing ephemeral and other non-permanent issue changes. Therefore, I relax two assumptions that underlie the binary distinction between *substitutions* and *diversifications*. These assumptions are that organizational changes occur at specific points in time and are only meaningful if permanent (Albert and Whetten 1985; Reger et al. 1994). Instead, I adopt a temporal view, treating organizational change as happening over extended periods and ignoring permanence as a relevance criterion (Gioia et al. 2013; cf. Abbott 2016). These alterations in assumptions do not affect when an issue change occurs, but when and how the type of an issue change is determined. In the temporal view, the type of an issue change is not determined at the point of its initiation but over time. Consider again the example of the *Committee for Freedom Now*. Here, the SMO's return to its initial issue shortly after the issue change allowed me to characterize the issue change as an *excursion*.

To generalize this temporal view to a temporal typology of issue changes, I consider three elements: 1) the set of an SMO's old issues, i.e., the issues of an SMO prior to an issue change; 2) the set of an SMO's new issues, i.e., new issues an SMO adopts at the issue change; and 3) whether or not an SMO keeps its old and new issues over time. As figure 1 illustrates, all possible combinations of whether an SMO keeps or drops its old and new issues lead to four types of issue changes, namely *substitution*, *diversification*, *excursion*, and *exploration*. In the following, I introduce these four types of issue change, which constitute different ways of moving in the social movement field, in more detail.

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[5] Of course, it would be possible to argue that the example case of *Committee for Freedom Now* constitutes a failed substitution or no issue change. However, by doing so, we will likely understate the importance of issue change for SMOs.

	SMO keeps New Issues	
	Yes	No
SMO keeps Old Issues — No	Substitution	Exploration
SMO keeps Old Issues — Yes	Diversification	Excursion

FIG. 1. – A Temporal Typology of Issue Change

Note: A temporal typology of issue change consisting of four types: *substitutions*, *diversifications*, *excursions*, and *explorations*. The classification of an issue change in the temporal typology depends on whether an SMO keeps or drops its old and new issues over time.

A *substitution* takes place if an SMO keeps its new issues and drops its old issues over time. Substantively, this means that one set of issues has given way to another. What characterizes a *diversification* is when one set of issues joins another. Therefore, an SMO undertakes a *diversification* if it keeps its new and old issues over time.[6] *Excursion* is the first new type of issue change in the temporal typology and occurs if an SMO drops its new issues but keeps its old issues over time. Hence, an *excursion* indicates that an SMO adopted a set of new issues for a brief period. Lastly, an *exploration* takes place when an SMO drops its old and new issues and adopts entirely different issues over time. In this case, the SMO seems to have no issues and to explore the social movement field in search of a new issue.

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[6] It is possible that an SMO first needs to return its old issues, as in the example of the *Committee of Freedom Now*. It only matters whether an SMO keeps or drops its old issues over time.

Hence, the temporal typology of issue changes keeps the two permanent issue change types of *substitutions* and *diversifications* but extends them with an ephemeral issue change type, i.e., *excursions*, and an eclectic issue change type, i.e., *explorations*. In general, I expect issue changes to occur infrequently due to the dilemma that SMOs face if they want to change their issues. Also, I expect *excursions* to be the most prevalent issue change type as they could offset the long-term harms while keeping the short-term benefits of issue change. Moreover, I expect that the prevalence order of issue change types follows their radicality, i.e., how much they change the SMOs. Issue changes come with implementation costs by requiring SMOs, for instance, to produce new protest materials or learn new tactics, which I assume, like harm to authenticity, to increase with their radicality (Larson 2009). Hence, I expect *excursions* to be the most prevalent type of issue change, followed by *diversifications*, *substitutions*, and *explorations*.

Forces in the Social Movement Field

Understanding how the issue change dilemma constrains SMOs in their movement in the social movement field helps to explain how often and in which ways SMOs change their issues, but not why. To answer what motivates and guides SMOs when changing their issues, I argue that what SMOs, i.e., their decision-makers, experience and adapt to in the social movement field are the issue properties and issue relations of their current and potential positions. The motivation for SMOs to change issues, then, comes from experiencing the forces that these issue relations and issue properties constitute in the social movement field (cf. Martin 2011). That is, SMOs are pushed away, bounded to, attracted by, or repelled from specific issues depending on these issue relations and issue properties, which motivate and guide issue changes, i.e., they impact if and between which issues SMOs move. Therefore, I argue that issue change is not a passive bending with wind but the result of SMOs experiencing and

strategically maneuvering the social movement field to gather and exploit the means for their survival and success. In the following, I outline the theoretical arguments of why particular issue properties and issue relations are likely to motivate and guide issue changes.

Issue Properties

The first issue property that likely motivates and guides issue changes is the need for SMOs to gather and exploit resources. According to resource mobilization theory (RMT), organizing and maintaining an effective protest effort is costly for SMOs as they need to accomplish many tasks over extended periods, e.g., mobilize protestors, produce protest materials, build coalitions with other SMOs, organize public relations, and pay staff (McCarthy and Zald 1977). However, RMT also assumes that resources available to work on a particular issue are limited, which leads to increasing resource competition as more SMOs work on the same issue (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Soule and King 2008; cf. Zuckerman 2017). To avoid resource competition, previous research in the tradition of RMT has shown that SMOs specialize in their goals and tactics to differentiate themselves from others (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Soule and King 2008; cf. Zuckerman 2017). Here, I build on this argument and evidence suggesting that resource availability motivate SMOs not only to specialize in their current issues but also to change them entirely, i.e., to undertake issue changes.

The second issue property likely to motivate issues changes is the gathering and exploitation of political opportunities, i.e., openings in the political structure, such as division in elites, shifting coalitions, having influential allies, or access to decision-makers (McAdam 1996; Tarrow 2011). Although political opportunity theory has mixed evidence (Meyer 2004) and primarily focuses on the movement rather than the organizational level (Larson 2009), political opportunities can positively affect essential outcomes for SMOs, such as mobilization (van Dyke and Soule 2002), coalition-building (van Dyke 2003), and policy success (Cress and

Snow 2000). As most political opportunities are not universal but tied to specific issues as issue-specific political opportunities (Banaszak 1996; Meyer and Minkoff 2004), I argue that they are likely to motivate and guide issue changes (cf. Wang et al. 2019).

The last issue property I consider as a possible motivation for SMOs to change their issues is media attention, which is of utmost importance for SMOs (Andrews and Caren 2010). Media attention can foster SMOs' legitimacy (Berry 1999) and growth (Vliegenthart, Oegema, and Klandermans 2005; Banjeree 2013) and empower them to shape public opinion in favor of their issues, increasing pressure for political response (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Walgrave, Soroka, and Nuyteman 2008; Amenta and Polletta 2019). Media attention, then, can lead to issue change as it is unequally distributed among issues and SMOs. Only a few issues and SMOs receive the vast majority of social movements' media coverage (Amenta et al. 2009), and once an issue or SMOs appears in the news, they remain there for a significant period (Amenta et al. 2009; Seguin 2016). Thus, I argue that SMOs undertake issue changes to gather or exploit media attention.

Issue Relations

The first issue relation that likely shapes issue changes that SMOs undertake is the proximity of issues in content space, i.e., the similarity of the issues' content (see Wang et al. 2019). The reasons for this are threefold. First, issue changes between issues that are more similar in content might be easier to conduct as the SMO's current framings, narratives, and materials are more straightforward to adapt to the new issue. Second, identity constraints interfering with issue changes should be less pronounced if issues are more alike, as the identities and ideologies of an SMO's members are likely to resonate with the new issues. At last, SMOs moving between issues more proximate in content might be more understandable for relevant audiences,

minimizing the harm the inflicted on the SMO's authenticity and perceived commitment. Therefore, I expect the context proximity between issues to motivate and guide issue changes.

In a similar vein, the second issue relation I argue to shape issue changes is the proximity of issues in cultural space, i.e., the similarity of how social movements work on issues (see Jung et al. 2014; Wang et al. 2019; Ring-Ramirez and Earl 2021). There are two reasons for this. First, the culture of a social movement primarily manifests itself in the choice of its tactics (Polletta and Jasper 2001; Taylor and Van Dyke 2004; Larson 2013), which, in turn, are strongly linked to particular sets of issues (Bearman and Everett 1993; Larson and Lizardo 2019). These relationships imply a great affinity between culturally more proximate issues, which could lessen the harm to an SMO's authenticity and perceived commitment in case of an issue change. In line with that, previous research has demonstrated that more culturally proximate issues are more likely to co-occur at protest events (Jung et al. 2014; Ring-Ramirez and Earl 2021). Second, issue changes between more culturally proximate issues might be easier to conduct as SMOs already know how to protest for their new issues, which saves the otherwise necessary time and resources to learn new tactics and fosters integration as cultural similarity can foster coalition-building between SMOs (Wang and Soule 2012). Therefore, I expect the cultural proximity between issues to motivate and guide issue changes.

As a last issue relation, I argue that status differences between issues can motivate and guide issue changes. There are two complementary reasons for this. First, SMOs protesting for an issue with a lower status might be inclined to move to an issue with a higher status to improve the status and the visibility of their low-status issue (Jung et al. 2014; Ring-Ramirez and Earl 2021). Second, SMOs working on high-status issues might want to associate themselves with low-status issues, which are commonly newer and put forth by grassroots movements to stay relevant and re-vitalize themselves (Voss and Sherman 2000; Jung et al. 2014). Because of this, I expect status differences between issues to motivate and guide issue changes.

Organizational Characteristics: Who is changing how?

Thus far, I have laid out arguments about how often and why SMOs change their issues, which leaves open the question of which SMOs undertake issue changes. To answer this question, I build on the field theoretical assumption that how susceptible elements are to field forces depends on their characteristics (cf. Martin 2011). In particular, I argue that SMOs are more or less likely to change issues and undertake different types of issue changes depending on three organizational characteristics, namely their age, size, and number of coalition partners.

Regarding organizational age, organizational theory assumes older organizations to have a lower organizational change rate due to structural inertia (Hannan and Freeman 1984). Furthermore, older SMOs could face an identity constraint if members resist change as their identities become intertwined with the SMO over time (cf. Abbott 2016, p. 13). Thus, older SMOs might be less susceptible to the forces in the social movement field and unlikely to change their issues, especially in radical ways. In contrast, younger SMOs are less likely to suffer from structural inertia and face such an identity constraint and, therefore, more likely to change their issues, even in radical ways, in response to field forces. Therefore, I expect that younger SMOs are generally more likely to change their issues than older SMOs. I also expect younger SMOs to undertake all types of issue changes and older SMOs to primarily undertake less radical issue changes, such as *excursions* or *diversifications.*[7]

In terms of organizational size, organizational theory assumes that larger organizations have more bureaucratic and formalized structures, which make them more vulnerable to structural inertia (Hannan and Freeman 1984). Older SMOs might, therefore, be less susceptible to field forces and unlikely to change their issues, especially in radical ways. In contrast, smaller SMOs with no formalized structures might be less likely to suffer from structural inertia and,

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[7] I define an issue change as radical if it results in an SMO entirely dropping its old issues, which is the case with *substitutions* or *explorations*. Older SMOs are SMOs with a lifespan of at least three years, while 85% of SMOs have a lifespan of less than two years.

therefore, more likely to change their issues in response to field forces than older SMOs. Therefore, I expect that smaller SMOs are generally more likely to change their issues than larger SMOs. Furthermore, I expect smaller SMOs to undertake all types of issue changes and larger SMOs to primarily undertake less radical issue changes, such as *excursions* or *diversifications*.

At last, while diffusion studies imply that coalition partners foster organizational change as SMOs adopt organizational elements from their coalition partners (Meyer and Whittier 1994; Strang and Soule 1998; Wang and Soule 2012), theoretical considerations imply a limit to such a relationship. As coalition partners usually work with an SMO because it is precisely doing what it is doing to build diverse coalitions (van Dyke and Amos 2017; Brooker and Meyer 2018; Gawerc 2020, 2021), which foster mobilization and WUNC perceptions (Walker and Stepick 2014; Wang et al. 2018; Bailey et al. 2023). Hence, coalition partners are interested in persuading an SMO to withstand field forces and not to change, especially not radically, and become like themselves so as not to risk the benefits of the coalition and avoid resource competition (Hathaway and Meyer 1993; cf. Zuckerman 2017). Therefore, I expect that SMOs with fewer coalition partners are generally more likely to change their issues than SMOs with more. Also, I expect SMOs with fewer coalition partners to undertake all types of issue changes and SMOs with more coalition partners to primarily undertake less radical issue changes, such as *excursions* or *diversifications*.

Data and Operationalization

Dynamics of Collective Action, 1960 – 1995

To answer my research questions, I use the Dynamics of Collective Action (DoCA), one of social movement research's most established data sets. The DoCA data set includes information

on over 23,000 protest events in the United States between 1960 and 1995 that the New York Times had covered. Notably, the data set provides the names of up to four participating SMOs and the raised claims for close to 10,000 protest events. In total, the DoCA includes 4,442 SMOs whose issues I can trace from one protest event to the next, which allows me to adopt a temporal view on issue change, unlike other data sources that use cross-sectional surveys or the names of SMOs to infer their issues.[8]

In particular, the DoCA data set provides 158 particular claims (e.g., 'Equal Pay,' 'Anti-Draft,' or 'Rainforest Preservation') that SMOs make at protest events nested in 15 broader issues: 'Anti-Nuclear (ANU),' 'Anti-Free Trade (AFT),' 'Women's Rights (FEM),' 'Peace (PEA),' 'Environmental (ENV),' 'African American Civil Rights (AFC),' 'Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights (LGB),' 'Hispanic Civil Rights (HIC),' 'Native American Civil Rights (NAC),' 'Asian American Civil Rights (ASC),' 'Disabled Civil Rights (DIC),' 'Anti-Ethnic/Immigrant (AIE),' 'Pro-Democracy/Human Rights (DHR),' 'Social Welfare (SOW),' and 'Affordable Housing/Homelessness (HOU).'[9]

The DoCA, like any newspaper data set, comes with the potential problems of selection bias and description bias that might undermine the validity of my results (Earl et al. 2004; Davenport 2009; Andrews and Caren 2010). Comparing newspaper coverage of protest events to a representative sample of protest events, Beyerlein et al. (2018) document that while newspapers' descriptions of protest events tend to be accurate, they are more likely to cover protest events larger in size, taking place in capitals, and on salient issues. Therefore, I likely underrepresent issue changes at smaller protest events in rural areas that involve less salient issues as origins or destinations. These selection biases, however, do not significantly affect my

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[8] Note that I use an updated list of the SMOs in DoCA provided by Jennifer Earl as the data set in its original form contains some SMOs multiple times due to typos and changing names available at https://sites.udel.edu/jearl/data-resources.

[9] These issues are not provided by the DoCA data set but by Wang et al. (2019, p. 428), who induced them by applying a community-detection algorithm on a co-occurrence network of claims, where two particular claims had a tie if they have been jointly protested for at a protest event at least once.

analysis, as issue changes between salient issues are most relevant and must occur at more significant protest events to be noticed and affect SMOs in the ways I proposed.

Policy Agenda Project

To supplement the DoCA data set with information on political and media context, I use data from the US Policy Agenda Project (US-PAP) (Baumgartner and Jones 2002). The US-PAP aims to systematically document and provide time-series data on the US government's and media outlets' attention on specific policy issues. It includes data sets on the New York Times, congressional hearings, roll call votes, executive orders, and State of the Union speeches, among others, each containing information on the policy issues they discussed since 1947. As the DoCA project provides a translation key to map issues SMOs put forth at protest events to the policy issue codes in the US-PAP, I leverage the latter data set to operationalize variables indicating political opportunities and media attention for specific issues.

Issue Change and Types of Issue Change

To determine whether an SMO has undertaken an issue change at a protest event, I compare the issues it puts forth at that protest event with its issue portfolio from all previous protest events. That is, an issue change takes place if an SMO protests for an issue for the first time, i.e., an issue it has never previously protested for, at a protest event.

To determine the type of an issue change, whether an SMO has conducted a *substitution*, *diversification*, *excursion*, or *exploration*, I trace whether an SMO keeps or drops its set of old issues O, i.e., the origin issues for which an SMO has already protested in the past, and its set of new issues N, i.e., the destination issues for which an SMO protest for

the first time, at each subsequent protest event within three years after an issue change.[10] In particular, I calculate the stability of the old issue set s_O and new issue set s_N as the share of all subsequent protest events within the next three years at which an SMO put forth issues that fall into the set of old issues of O and set of new issues N, respectively.

At this point, I make two analytical decisions. First, I treat sets of old issues O or new issues N that contain multiple issues as a whole rather than any of their particular issue by themselves. Second, to keep a multi-issue set of old issues O or new issues N, an SMO only needs to put forth any single issue at a protest event rather than a particular share or all issues on the respective set. Effectively, these two assumptions imply that an SMO drops its sets of old issues O or new issues S if (and only if!) an SMO stops protesting for all issues on the respective set in the next three years. I make these analytical decisions as I assume audiences perceive SMOs as gestalts, i.e., as wholes, and issue changes as changes in these gestalts to ensure that *substitutions* and *explorations* always capture complete alternations and *diversifications* and *excursions* any (temporary) expansions of these gestalts. These analytical decisions come at the expense of a more fine-grained analysis of issue changes that would allow, for example, to dissect a *diversification* involving two issues into one *diversification* and one *excursion* and potentially discover further types of issue change. The purpose of my temporal typology and its implementation is not to be logically or empirically exhaustive but to capture the phenomenological relevant types of issue change that audiences perceive.

For illustration, if an SMO protests for its set of old issues O at three out of five and its set of new issues N at four out of five subsequent protest events after an issue change, s_O takes on the value of 0.6 and s_N the value of 0.8. Values of s_O and s_N range from 0 to 1, where a value

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[10] This restriction of the period of subsequent protest events is necessary as I treat issues changes as strategic maneuvers. I chose a window of three years as this corresponds to the average length of protest cycles in the DoCA data (cf. Wang and Soule 2016).

of 0 indicates that within three years after an issue change, an SMO never protests for any issue from the issue sets O and N, respectively, and a value of 1 that an SMO protests for any issues in the issue sets O and N, respectively, at each subsequent protest event. As such extreme values are rare, I set a threshold of lower than 0.2 to determine that an SMO drops its issue sets O and N, respectively.[11] Hence, if $s_O < 0.2$, the SMO drops its old issues in O over time. Similarly, if $s_N < 0.2$, the SMO drops its new issues in N over time. In substantive terms, for an SMO to keep its sets of old issues O or new issues N, it needs to protest for these respective sets at least at one-fifth of its subsequent protest events in the next three years after an issue change. Depending on whether SMO has kept or dropped its old and new issues, I classify the change as *substitution*, *diversification*, *excursion*, or *exploration*. Table 1 provides examples, definitions, and ranges of the stability values s_O and s_N for each issue change type.

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[11] I choose this relatively low threshold to be conservative regarding the decision when an SMO has dropped an issue set. However, results are robust to changes in the threshold to 0.1 and 0.3. Also, a threshold of 0 identifies all issue changes as *diversifications*. As in this case, an SMO keeps its old issue set O and new issue set S by default, regardless of whether it protests for them even once in the next three years.

Table 1. Definitions, Examples, and Classification of Issue Change Types

	Substitution	Diversification	Excursion	Exploration
Example	$s_O = 0.0$ $s_N = 0.8$	$s_O = 0.8$ $s_N = 0.6$	$s_O = 0.8$ $s_N = 0.0$	$s_O = 0.0$ $s_N = 0.0$
	Event 5: No / Yes — 3 Years	Event 5: No / Yes — 3 Years	Event 5: Yes / No — 3 Years	Event 5: No / No — 3 Years
	Event 4: No / No	Event 4: Yes / No	Event 4: Yes / No	Event 4: No / No
	Event 3: No / Yes	Event 3: Yes / Yes	Event 3: No / No	Event 3: No / No
	Event 2: No / Yes	Event 2: Yes / Yes	Event 2: Yes / No	Event 2: No / No
	Event 1: No / Yes	Event 1: Yes / No	Event 1: Yes / No	Event 1: No / No
	Change Event: Yes / Yes	Change Event: Yes / Yes	Change Event: Yes / Yes	Change Event: Yes / Yes
	Old Issues / New Issues	Old Issues / New Issues	Old Issues / New Issues	Old Issues / New Issues
Definition	An SMO drops its set of old issues O but keeps its set of new issues N over time.	An SMO keeps both its set of old issues in O and its set of new issues N over time.	An SMO keeps its set of old issues O but drops its set of new issues N over time.	An SMO drops both its sets of old issues O and its set of new issues in N over time.
Events with Old Issues (%)	Less than 20% $s_O < 0.2$	At least 20% $s_O \geq 0.2$	At least 20% $s_O \geq 0.2$	Less than 20% $s_O < 0.2$
Events with New Issues (%)	At least 20% $s_N \geq 0.2$	At least 20% $s_N \geq 0.2$	Less than 20% $s_N < 0.2$	Less than 20% $s_N < 0.2$

Note: The old issue set O contains all issues an SMO had before a change event, i.e., a protest event with an issue change. The new issue set N contains the new issues an SMO adopts at the change event. In the examples, the SMOs organize five protest events in the three years after their change events, but the number varies in reality. 'Yes' and 'No' indicate whether an SMO protested for its old issues O and new issues N at a particular protest event. If the share of protest events with the old issues set s_O or the new issue set s_N is lower than 0.2, an SMO has dropped its old issues O or new issues N respectively.

Issue Change Networks

To operationalize the social movement field, I construct longitudinal sets of issue change networks for each issue change type from 1963 to 1995.[12] I periodize the issue change networks using three-year windows as the issues between which SMOs move, issue properties, and issue relations have likely changed over time (cf. Jung et al. 2014; cf. Larson and Lizardo 2019).[13] Therefore, each issue change network covers three years and consists of 15 issues as nodes. Binary and directed ties between two nodes exist if at least one SMO has undertaken the respective type of issue change between them in the given period. Hence, I ended up with eleven issue change networks for each type of issue change (see figures A1 – A4 in the appendix).

Issue Properties and Issue Relations

As I use longitudinal network data in my analysis, I measure issue properties and issue relations separately for each of the eleven periods the issue change networks cover. Moreover, to operationalize issue properties and issue relations in a given period, I use data from the previous period to address the endogeneity arising from the fact that the movements of SMOs between issues affect the issue properties and issue relations between issues in a given period.

To operationalize the density of SMOs working on an issue as a proxy of resource competition, I use the total number of SMOs that have at least once protested for a specific issue in a given period. To operationalize the extent of political opportunities available to each issue, I use information from two data sets of the US-PAP. To operationalize short-term political opportunities, I use the number of congressional hearings for each specific issue that took place in a given period and the number of times a specific issue was mentioned in State of the Union

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[12] I do not construct the issue change networks for the first period from 1960 to 1963, as I use information from previous periods to operationalize variables in my analysis, which is missing for the first period.
[13] I use three years as the window size as this reflects the average length of protest cycles in the DoCA data (cf. Wang & Soule 2016).

speeches (SotU) to assess long-term political opportunities.[14] Lastly, to operationalize media attention granted to an issue, I use the number of paragraphs that cover a specific issue from a sample of New York Times articles in a given period available in the US-PAP.

Turning to issue relations, I operationalize the content proximity of issue i to issue j by their number of co-occurrences at protest events normalized by the total number of protests on issue i in a given period (Wang et al. 2019). The reason for this is that higher levels of co-occurrence between two issues indicate that they are more similar in content (cf. Rao, Monin, and Durand 2005). To operationalize the cultural proximity between two issues, I calculate the Jaccard similarity index between all unique tactics that all SMOs working on the two issues have used at protest events in the given period (Wang and Soule 2012; Jung et al. 2014; Wang et al. 2019; Ring-Ramirez and Earl 2021). Lastly, to operationalize the status of a particular issue, I use its degree centrality in an issue co-occurrence network weighted by the number of active social movements and the number of protest events with multiple issues in a given period (Jung et al. 2014; Ring-Ramirez and Earl 2021). Hence, the higher the number of issues with which it co-occurs, the higher the status of an issue.[15]

Organizational Characteristics

To operationalize the age of an SMO at a protest event, I take the years that have passed since its first protest event recorded in the DoCA data set.[16] To measure the size of an SMO at a protest event, I use the number of cities in which an SMO had protested during the last two

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[14] I interpret congressional hearings as short-term political opportunities as they indicate the early stages of a policy-making process (Eissler and Jones 2019) and State of the Union speeches as long-term political opportunities as they lay out the overall policy agenda of an Administration.

[15] Since I am not interested in substantive interpretations of effect sizes, I standardize all variables to ease visualization. Note that using unstandardized variables does not change the interpretation of results.

[16] Note that I calculate ages which are too low for SMOs that have existed before 1960. However, I do not assume this bias to affect my results as the average lifespan of SMOs in the DoCA data is two years.

years.[17] Finally, I use the number of coalition partners an SMO jointly co-protested within the last two years to measure its partners at a protest event.

Methodology

I apply temporal exponential random graph models (TERGMs) to test whether issue properties and issue relations constitute field forces affecting tie formation in the issue change networks, i.e., whether they motivate and guide issue changes (Leifeld, Cranmer, and Desmarais 2018).[18] TERGMs are longitudinal extensions of cross-sectional exponential random graph models (ERGMs) that estimate parameters to weight factors and processes considered important for network formation such that the observed network has an increased possibility to be drawn from the resulting distribution of all possible networks (Lusher, Koskinen, and Robins 2013). TERGMs extend this approach to longitudinal observations of networks by modeling the probability of a set of observed networks via estimating the joint probability of the individual networks, assuming that earlier occurring networks are independent of later occurring networks.

Therefore, I estimate TERGMs for each issue change type with similar model specifications. In particular, I specify each issue property as a node attribute and include them as node sender and node receiver effects in the models to assess whether they affect the number of outgoing and incoming ties of a node, i.e., mobility away from and towards issues. Therefore, positive sender and receiver effects of an issue property indicate that higher values are associated with more movement away from and towards an issue, and vice versa for lower values. Therefore, I use the sender and receiver effects' direction and statistical significance to evaluate whether an issue property motivates or guides issue changes by interpreting them in

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[17] I assume the number of cities to be a valid proxy of size as it is more likely that larger SMOs are active in more cities than that smaller SMOs are excessively mobile.
[18] I conducted the analysis using the *btergm* package (Leifeld et al. 2018) in R version 4.3.1 (R Core Team 2023).

the following ways: if an issue property has a positive sender effect, its presence *pushes* SMOs away; if it has a negative sender effect its presence *binds* SMOs to it; if it has a positive receiver effect its presence *attracts* SMOs to it; and if it has a negative receiver effect its presence *repels* SMOs from it.

Regarding the issue relations, content proximity and cultural proximity enter the model as edge covariates (*edgecov*), allowing me to evaluate whether these relations between issues affect whether SMOs move between them.[19] Thus, a positive edge covariate effect of content proximity indicates that issue changes are more likely between issues that are more similar in content. To assess whether status differences motivate and guide issue changes, I specify status as a node attribute and include an absolute difference effect (*absdiff*) into the models evaluating whether ties are more likely between more status dissimilar nodes.[20] Hence, a positive absolute difference effect indicates that issue changes are more likely between issues that differ in status.

Moreover, TERGMs allow the inclusion of structural and temporal terms to assess the effect of relational processes, overall network structure, and previous periods on network formation. As for structural parameters, I include an *edge* term to represent the overall likelihood of ties and a *mutual* term to evaluate whether ties tend to be reciprocated. To account for transitivity, i.e., whether SMOs tend to move between issues that share mobility with another issue, I include a term to model the directed geometrically weighted edgewise shared partner distribution of nodes (*dgwesp*). Turning to temporal parameters, I include a *memory* term assessing whether previous instantiations of the networks affect the formation of the later networks to control for established pathways between issues that formed over the history of the social movement field. To assess whether ties from previous periods tend to be reciprocated in

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[19] As edge covariates do not accept missing data, I follow the suggestion of Leifeld et al. (2018) to use median imputation to impute missing values in the content and cultural proximity matrices. Other imputation strategies yield similar results, such as zero- or mean imputation.

[20] As previous research on the co-occurrence of issues has demonstrated curvilinear effects of status dissimilarity between issues, I also include a squared absolute difference effect for status into the models (Jung et al. 2014; Ring-Ramirez and Earl 2021).

later periods, I include a *delayed reciprocity* term and a *timecov* term to determine if the likelihood of ties changes over time.

Results

Prevalence of Issue Changes

In line with my expectations, issue change is uncommon, with only 605 of the 4,442 SMOs (13.6%) in the DoCA data set changing issues at all. Of those, 38% changed multiple times for a total of 1,108 issue changes. SMOs that change issues differ from those that do not. They have a longer lifespan (Mean = 10.59 vs. 0.62 years, $p < 0.001$), are larger (Mean = 4.87 vs. 1.05 cities, $p < 0.001$), and stronger embedded (Mean = 6.17 vs. 0.84 coalition partners, $p < 0.001$). These differences indicate that changing issues is crucial for the long-term survival of SMOs.[21] However, they do not rule out the possibility of short-term threats of issue changes to the existence of SMOs.

SMOs are also more likely to undertake some types of issue change than others, i.e., to move in specific ways in the social movement field. The descriptive results show that 80 (7.2%) of the total 1,108 issues changes are *substitutions*, 164 (14.8%) are *diversifications*, 377 (34.0%) are *excursions*, and 51 (4.6 %) are *explorations*.[22] On the level of the organizations, out of the 605 SMOs that have conducted issues changes, 79 (13.1 %) conducted *substitutions*, 133 (22.0%) *diversifications*, 192 (31.7%) *excursions*, and 44 (7.2%) *explorations*. Figure 2

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[21] These differences are unlikely to result from survivor bias, i.e., older SMOs had more opportunities to undertake issue changes. Figure A5 in the appendix reveals that issue-changing SMOs, which survived for at least ten years, undertaken the largest share of issue changes in the first three years of their existence.

[22] Note that the percentages do not add up to 100% as a sizeable residual category of 436 (39.4%) exists due to right-censoring. For this residual category of issue changes, I cannot determine their type as the SMOs undertaking them had no subsequent protest events.

reveals that this pattern is stable over time and that the overall prevalence of issue changes aligns with the overall level of protest activity (black line).
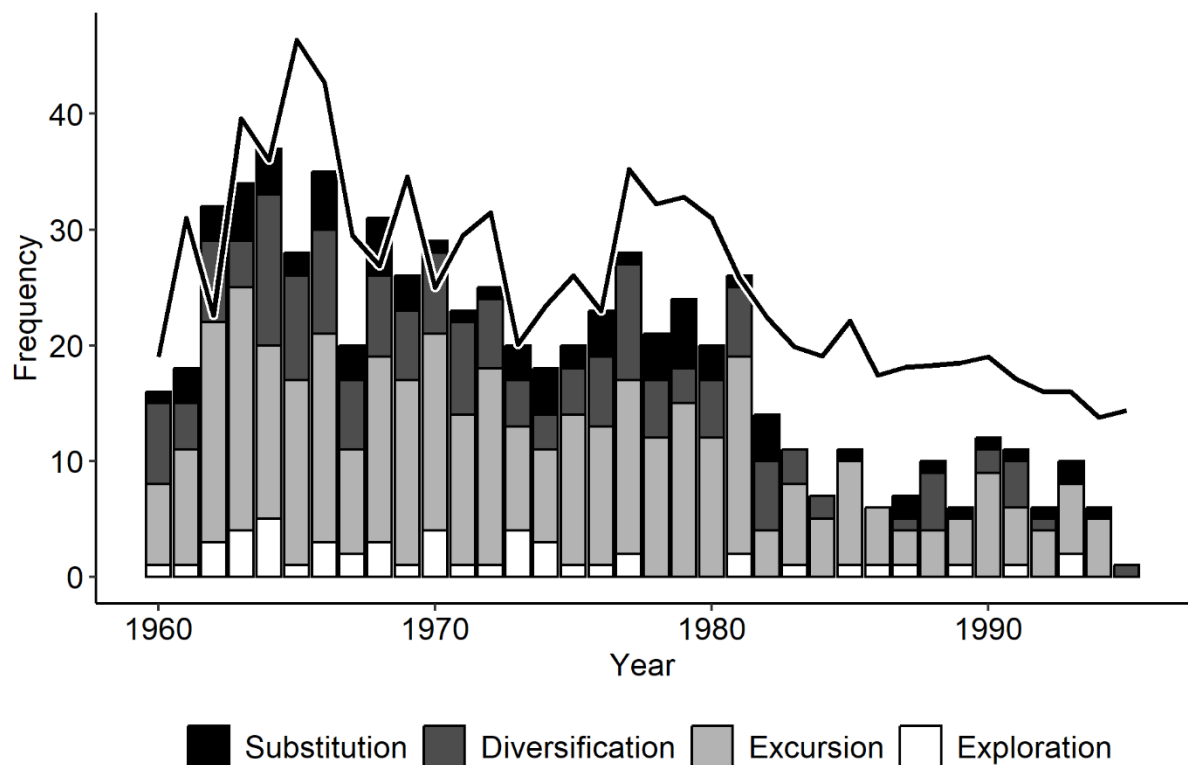
FIG. 2. – Yearly Prevalence of Issue Change
Note: Yearly frequencies of *substitutions*, *diversifications*, *excursions*, and *explorations* in the US social movement field between 1960 and 1995. The black line refers to the level of protest activity, i.e. the number of protest events in a given year divided by 100.

As expected, *excursions* are the most prevalent type of issue change. The reason for this could be that *excursions*, as ephemeral issue changes, offer a solution to the issue change dilemma, as they raise fewer doubts about the authenticity of SMOs and are less subject to identity constraints. Another indicator that SMOs face a dilemma constraining their movement in the social movement field when changing their issues is that, as expected, the prevalence order of issue changes follows their radicality and implementation cost in decreasing order from *excursions*, through *diversifications* and *substitutions* to *explorations*.[23]

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[23] I have conducted two robustness checks to test the robustness of these descriptive results. In the first robustness check, I used different thresholds (0.1 and 0.3) to determine the types of issue change to rule out threshold sensitivity. In a second robustness check, I restricted the analysis to issue changes at protest events organized by a

These descriptive statistics expose the importance of issue changes for SMOs. Although only a fraction of SMOs undertakes issue changes, these SMOs tend to live longer, become larger, and find more coalition partners. They also change their issue strategically, as the different prevalences of issue change types indicate. If so, what motivates SMOs to undertake specific types of issue change? I argue that the configuration of field positions, i.e., the issue properties and issue relations, constitute field forces motivating and guiding issue changes in the social movement field. A first indication of this being the case would be if the issues between which SMOs moved changed over time. In the next section, I therefore investigate between which issues SMOs moved in the US social movement field between 1960 and 1995.

Origins & Destinations: Movement in the US Social Movement Field

Before investigating whether issue properties and relations constitute field forces that motivate and guide different types of issue changes, I provide an overview of the origins and destinations of issue changes undertaken by US SMOs between 1960 and 1995. For this purpose, figure 3 visualizes the movements of SMOs between particular issues with the origins on the left-hand and the destinations on the right-hand side ordered by magnitude across four time periods. Two general observations hold across all periods. First, while there seemed to be little constraint between which issues SMOs could move, most issue changes occurred between a few large social movements, particularly between the African American Civil Rights Movement, the Social Welfare Movement, and the Peace Movement. Second, modular issues, more likely to be compatible with other issues, such as the Social Welfare and Pro-Democracy/Human Rights Movements, tended to be the most prominent destinations of issue changes.

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single SMO to rule out the possibility that issue changes are primarily driven by coalition-building. The results and conclusions drawn in both robustness checks remain substantively the same.

In the first period (1960 – 1968), and during the Martin Luther King era, the African American Civil Rights Movement (AFC) was the origin of almost a quarter of all conducted issue changes to a wide variety of destinations, but mainly to the Social Welfare Movement (SOW), the Peace Movement (PEA), and the Pro-Democracy/Human Rights Movement (DHR). In turn, these three social movements were also the origins and destinations of a substantial share of issue changes, which is unsurprising as this period also marks the heydays of anti-Vietnam war protests.
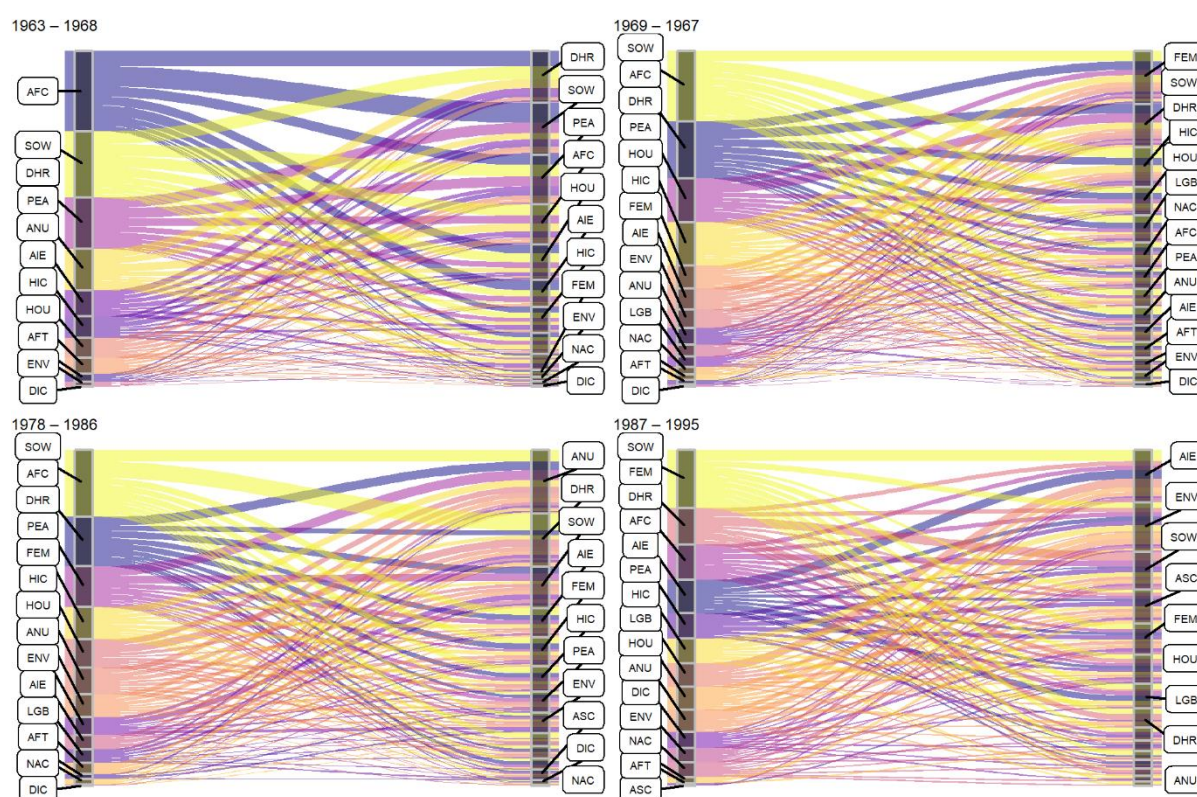
FIG. 3. – Origins and Destinations of Issue Canges in the US Social Movement Field
Note: Issue changes in four periods, i.e., 1960 – 1968, 1969 – 1977, 1978 – 1986, and 1987 – 1995. Panels display issues as origins on the left and destinations on the right, ordered by the magnitude of incoming or outgoing issue changes. ANU: Anti-Nuclear; AFT: Anti-Free Trade, FEM: Women's Rights; PEA: Peace; ENV: Environmental; AFC: African American Civil Rights; LGB: Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights; HIC: Hispanic Civil Rights; NAC: Native American Civil Rights; ASC: Asian American Civil Rights; DIC: Disabled Civil Rights; AIE: Anti-Ethnic/Immigrant; DHR: Pro-Democracy/Human Rights; SOW: Social Welfare; HOU: Affordable Housing/Homelessness.

In the second period (1969 – 1977), the two dominant social movements of the 1960s, the African American Civil Rights Movement (AFC) and the Peace Movement (PEA), declined. After the Martin Luther King era and the heydays of the Anti-Vietnam War protests, both social

movements became much less prominent as destinations and, to a lesser extent, also as origins for issue changes. Indeed, the Social Welfare Movement (SOW) was the origin of most issue changes in this period and was, as a destination, only surpassed by the growing Women's Rights Movement (FEM). The Pro-Democracy/Human Rights Movement (DHR) remained another prominent origin and destination of issue changes in this period.

In the third period (1978 – 1986), the Women's Rights Movement (FEM) lost its position as the most prominent destination to the Anti-Nuclear Movement (ANU), which experienced its peak mobilizing over one million people against nuclear weapons and the Cold War arms race in New York's Central Park on June 12, 1982. Moreover, the decline of the African Civil Rights Movement (AFC) and the Peace Movement (PEA) did not continue. Both social movements stagnated in the sense that, akin to the previous period, they were still origins for a substantial share of issue changes but much less prominent as destinations. Again, the Social Welfare Movement (SOW) originated most issue changes, and the Pro-Democracy/Human Rights Movement (DHR) remained another prominent origin and destination in this period.

In the last period (1987 – 1995), the Anti-Ethnic/Immigrant Movement (AIE) was the most prominent destination. However, this was due to protests against the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1987 and the California Proposition 187 in 1994, targeting educational and labor market access of (so-called) illegal migrants. The Environmental Movement (ENV) was another prominent destination of issue changes, presumably because of its turn towards environmental justice, opening the social movement to the white middle class. The Social Welfare Movement (SOW), however, again was the most prominent origin of issue changes, followed by the Women's Rights Movement (FEM), which experienced its most engaging period protest-wise with the beginning of third-wave feminism. Also, the African Civil Rights Movement (AFC), the Peace Movement (PEA), and the Pro-Democracy/Human Rights Movement (DHR) became comparatively less significant as origins and destinations for issue changes during this period.

Field Forces: What motivates and guides issue changes?

What motivates SMOs to undertake issue changes, and in what direction? The history of how SMOs moved in the US social movement field indicates that the issues themselves influence issue changes as the prominence of issues as origins and destinations varied over time. What makes SMOs move towards or away from issues in the social movement field? To answer this question, I estimated four TERGMs to evaluate the effects *of* issue properties – i.e., resources, political opportunities, and media attention – and issue relations – i.e., content, cultural, and status proximity – on the formation of ties in four longitudinal issue change networks, where nodes are issues and directed ties are issue changes of respective types (see figures A1 – A4 in the appendix). Figures 4 – 7 present the results of the four TERGMs as coefficient plots where effects are significant if their horizontal error bars, i.e., confidence intervals, do not overlap with zero.[24]

As expected, *issue properties* and *issue relations* seem to motivate and guide issue changes as field forces, and motivations seem to differ for different types of issue changes. However, the TERGM results also reveal three motivating and guiding *issue properties* and *issue relations* common across all types of issue change. First, the positive *sender* effect of density for all types of issue change implies that evading resource competition is a general motivation for SMOs to undertake issue changes. Second, what generally seems to guide issue changes is the effort of SMOs to save costs and minimize harm to their authenticity by moving between issues that are culturally more similar due to similar tactics, as the positive effect of cultural proximity for all types of issue change implies. These two general motivations are consistent with the descriptive observations that the prevalence of issue change types follows their potential harms to authenticity and implementation costs and

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[24] Note that the coefficient plots do not display structural and temporal parameters, as they are of minor interest to me. However, table A1 in the appendix provides the complete results of all four TERGMs, and Figure A6 includes goodness of fit statistics.

that issue changes tend to originate from larger social movements. Lastly, the negative *sender* effect of hearings, i.e., the number of congressional hearings on an issue, suggests that SMOs are generally less inclined to make issue changes when there are exploitable short-term political opportunities for their issues that may pave the way to success (except for *diversifications*). Furthermore, the positive *transitivity* parameter for all four types of issue changes suggests that SMOs are more likely to change between issues that share mobility with another issue. Sharing mobility to another issue might improve the legitimacy of moving between issues, making SMOs fear less about their authenticity. Beyond these general motivations, the TERGM results suggest that there are also specific motivations for each type of issue change, which I will discuss next.

Beginning with *substitutions*, the TERGM results in figure 4 reveal two particular issue properties that motivate *substitutions*. The positive *sender* effects of SotU, i.e., how often an issue was mentioned in State of the Union speeches, and media suggest that SMOs undertake *substitutions* when their issues have a strong presence in politics and media, and they, therefore, have a solid chance to achieve their issue-specific goals. Under these circumstances, both success and failure, i.e., whether SMOs achieve their issue-specific goals or not, can motivate SMOs to undertake *substitutions* (Zald and Ash 1966, p 333f.). In the case of success, SMOs need to find new issue-specific goals if they want to stay in operation, which they can achieve by undertaking *substitutions*. Take, for example, *Youth Against War and Fascism*, who protested for the highly salient issue of 'African American Civil Rights' during the civil rights era up until the ratification of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. After this crucial issue-specific success, *Youth Against War and Fascism* substituted away from 'African American Civil Rights' to 'Peace' issues to find new issue-specific goals that the ongoing Vietnam War provided. In the case of failure, SMOs may undertake *substitutions* because they no longer believe they can reach their issue-specific goals. Take, for instance, the *Public Interest Research Group*, which protested for 'Environmental' issues in the early 1970s. Even though 'Environmental' issues

experienced a tremendous increase in political and media attention during this period, no political action was taken to tackle the issue. Failure to achieve issue-specific goals under these favorable circumstances likely weakened the *Public Interest Research Group's* conviction that it was possible to achieve its issue-specific goals, eventually leading it to undertake a *substitution* from 'Environmental' to 'Social Welfare' issues in 1973.

FIG. 4. – TERGM Coefficient Plot (Substitution)
Note: Coefficient plot visualizing temporal exponential random graph model results for the issue change networks (*substitution*). Dots represent the effect sizes of coefficients. If the horizontal bars representing Bootstrap intervals (1,000 iterations) do not overlap with zero (dotted line), effects are significant on the 95% level. Structural and temporal parameters are not visualized (see table A1 in the appendix).

Moving on to *diversifications*, the TERGM results in figure 5 reveal one issue property motivating and guiding *diversifications*. The positive *receiver* effect for SotU suggests that the motivation for SMOs to undertake *diversifications* is to increase the amount of political attention for their issues by linking them to issues currently in the focus of politics. For example, *Greenpeace U.S.A.* diversified and started to protest for 'Peace' next to 'Environmental' issues in 1991. During this time, the Gulf War made the 'Peace' issue one of

the most prominent political topics in the USA, to which *Greenpeace U.S.A.* tried to link their 'Environmental' issues with the aim of attracting political attention. Therefore, *Greenpeace U.S.A.* started to protest for 'Peace' alongside 'Environmental' issues and published studies about the environmental costs of the Gulf War.
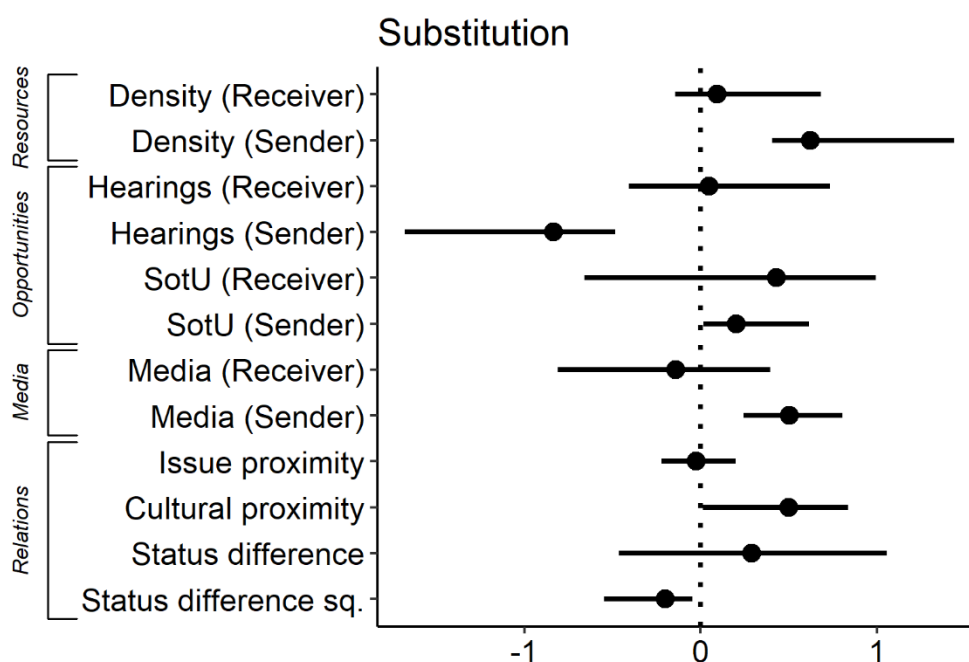

FIG. 5. – TERGM Coefficient Plot (Diversification)
Note: Coefficient plot visualizing temporal exponential random graph model results for the issue change networks (*diversification*). Dots represent the effect sizes of coefficients. If the horizontal bars representing Bootstrap intervals (1,000 iterations) do not overlap with zero (dotted line), effects are significant on the 95% level. Structural and temporal parameters are not visualized (see table A1 in the appendix).

Turning to *excursions*, the TERGM results in figure 6 reveal three issue properties and one issue relation that particularly motivate and guide *excursions*. The positive receiver effect for hearings suggests that one motivation for SMOs to undertake *excursions* could be to support other social movements that currently have the chance to make political progress for their issues. In this way, SMOs can build relationships that could be useful later and increase their chances of political progress if the success of the social movements they support creates political opportunities. Moreover, the positive sender effect of the media implies that SMOs are

particularly likely to support other social movements if they are in a favorable situation regarding media attention and would, therefore, benefit from a more open political opportunity structure. Also, the positive effect of status differences between issues implies that efforts of status improvement, i.e., making an *excursion* from a low to a high-status issue or re-connecting to the grassroots, i.e., vice versa, could motivate and guide SMOs when undertaking *excursions*. Take, for example, the *Gay Activists Alliance,* which protested for 'Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights' issues when the Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Movement was emerging in the early 1970s. Because of this novelty, 'Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights' were almost the issue with the lowest status in the social movement field at the time, which is why, in the hope of improving its standing, the *Gay Activists Alliance* undertook an *excursion* to 'Social Welfare,' the issue with the highest status, in 1971.
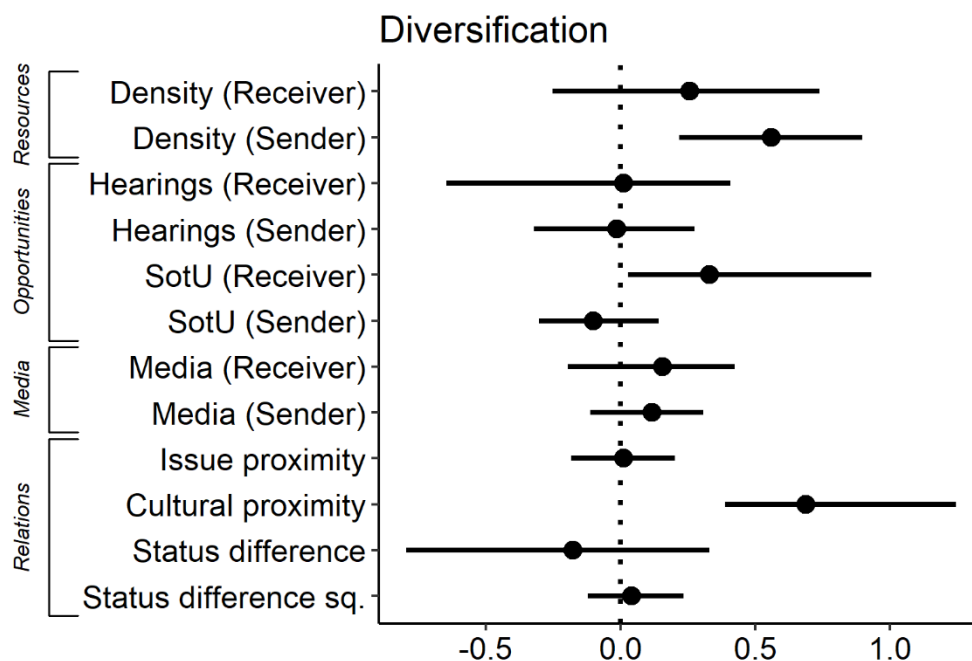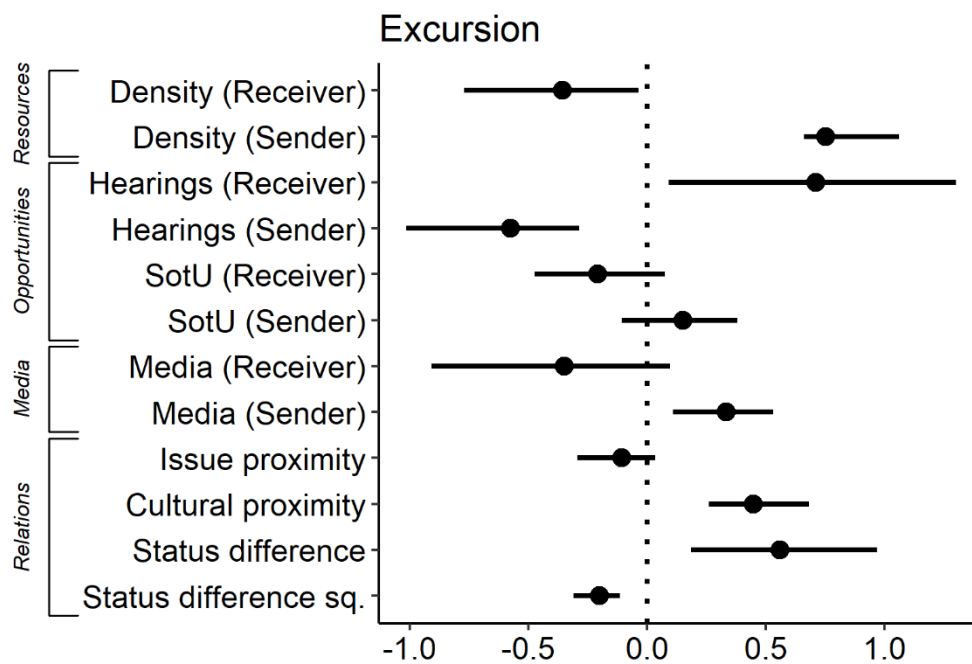

FIG. 6. – TERGM Coefficient Plot (Excursion)

Note: Coefficient plot visualizing temporal exponential random graph model results for the issue change networks (*excursion*). Dots represent the effect sizes of coefficients. If the horizontal bars representing Bootstrap intervals (1,000 iterations) do not overlap with zero (dotted line), effects are significant on the 95% level. Structural and temporal parameters are not visualized (see table A1 in the appendix).

For another example, take the *American Civil Liberties Union*, one of the most known SMOs in the US, which undertook an *excursion* toward 'Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights' issues in 1973. During this time, the *American Civil Liberties Union* protested for the two most established, high-status issues of 'Social Welfare' and 'African American Civil Rights' and likely undertook this *excursion* to support the growing Gay and Lesbian Rights Movement to re-vitalize itself in the aftermath of the civil rights era.

Regarding *explorations*, the TERGM results in figure 7 reveal no specific motivation beyond the general motivations discussed earlier. If there are issue properties and issue relations that particularly motivate and guide *explorations*, they seem to be outside the scope of factors I have considered. However, that I do not find any specific motivation for *explorations* also indicates their eclectic nature.
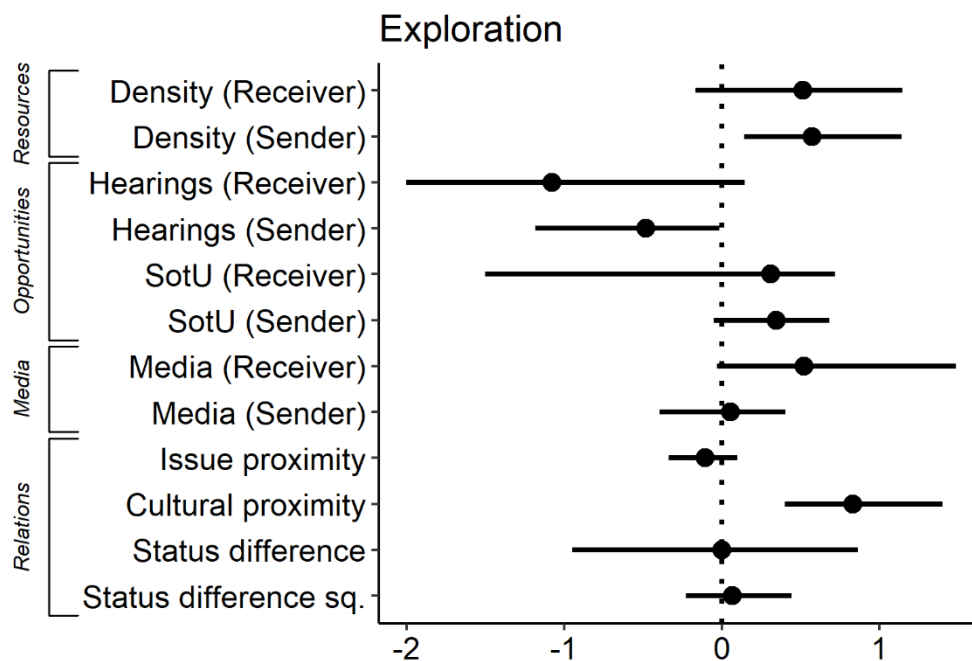
FIG. 7. – TERGM Coefficient Plot (Exploration)

Note: Coefficient plot visualizing temporal exponential random graph model results for the issue change networks (*exploration*). Dots represent the effect sizes of coefficients. If the horizontal bars representing Bootstrap intervals (1,000 iterations) do not overlap with zero (dotted line), effects are significant on the 95% level. Structural and temporal parameters are not visualized (see table A1 in the appendix).

Lastly, the TERGMs provide evidence of temporal processes affecting different types of issue changes. I find a negative linear time trend for *diversifications* and *excursions*, implying that SMOs became less likely to undertake these types of issue changes over time. Finally, the positive *memory* effects indicate that established pathways for *substitutions* and *excursions* have developed in the social movement field, as the issues between which these two types of issue change occur have remained stable over time. In conclusion, the TERGMs reveal how issue properties and issue relations constitute field forces motivating and guiding issue changes in particular ways. In the next section, I provide evidence about which SMOs are more or less likely to respond to these field forces.

The Organizational Correlates of Issue Change

Building on the field theoretical assumption that elements' susceptibility to field forces depend on their characteristics, I expect that SMOs are more or less likely to generally undertake issue changes or specific types depending on their organizational characteristics. In particular, I expect younger, smaller, and weakly embedded SMOs to undertake more and all types of issue changes. In contrast, I expect their older, larger, well-embedded counterparts to undertake less issue changes and only less radical types, i.e., *diversifications* and *excursions*. Figure 8 reveals that these expectations overall match the empirical observations. All types of issue changes are primarily undertaken by younger, smaller, and weakly embedded SMOs. Although there are differences in average age, size, and number of coalition partners between the SMOs undertaking the four types of issue change, they are mostly not significant according to t-tests. Only *excursions* are undertaken by significantly older, larger, and well-embedded SMOs. Although these differences between *excursions* and other types of issue change are minor, they are essential to understanding the relationship between organizational characteristics and types of issue change. The distributions of organizational characteristics for each issue change type

in figure 8 reveal that these differences are the result of older, larger, and well-embedded SMOs undertaking *excursions* but no other types of issue changes.[25] On the level of organizations, once SMOs reach a certain age, size, and number of coalition partners, they seem only to be able to undertake *excursions*.[26]

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Mean = 4.76
Mean = 6.76
Mean = 4.38
Mean = 4.97

Mean = 1.75
Mean = 6.92
Mean = 2.59
Mean = 2.17

Mean = 2.51
Mean = 6.38
Mean = 3.23
Mean = 2.05

Age   Size   Coalition Partners

■ Substitution ■ Diversification ▨ Excursion □ Exploration
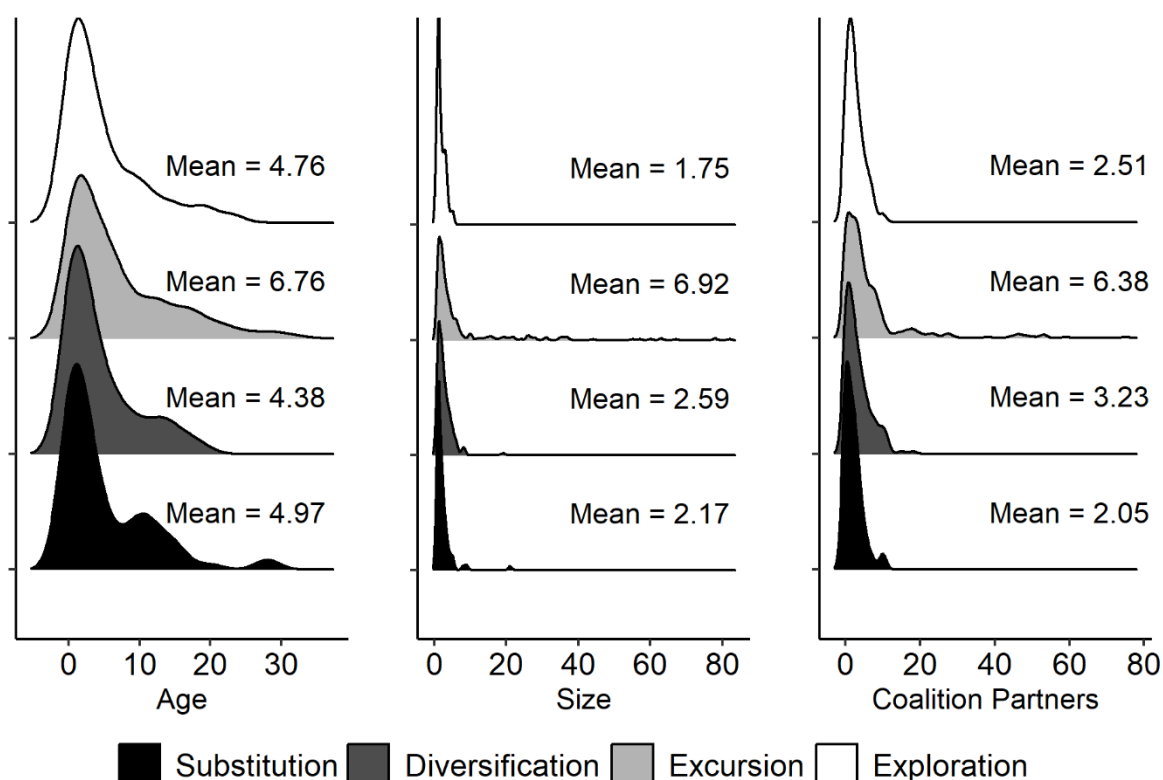
FIG. 8 – Organizational Characteristics and Issue Change
Note: Distributions of age, size, and coalition partners of SMOs undertaking *substitutions*, *diversifications*, *excursions*, and *explorations*. Age is measured in years since an SMO's first protest event reported in the New York Times. Size refers to the number of cities an SMO has protested in the last two years. Coalition partners indicate the number of unique SMOs with which an SMO jointly protested in the last two years.

These descriptive results on the organizational correlates of issue change align my theoretical expectations. While younger and smaller SMOs seem capable of undertaking all

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[25] The only exception to this pattern is that a few old SMOs undertake *substitutions*. A possible explanation is that above a certain age, SMOs either restrict themselves to *excursions* or change according to the motto 'all or nothing.'

[26] Figure A7 in the appendix supports this finding by displaying the relative frequencies of each issue change type at the xth issue change for all SMOs. While SMOs undertake all four types of issue change up to their seventh issue change, the proportion of *excursions* constantly increases and becomes dominant from the eighth issue change onwards.

types of issue change, older and larger SMOs seem constrained only to undertake *excursions*. For instance, the *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People* and the *Congress of Racial Equality*, two of the oldest, largest, and best-embedded SMOs in the DoCA data, only undertook *excursions*. The *National Organization for Women* undertook a *substitution* in its founding years but only *excursions* in later life stages. This constraint of older and larger SMOs stems from structural inertia due to their established routines, structures, and cultures standing in the way of changing their issues (Hannan and Freeman 1984). Another possibility is that older and larger SMOs face an identity constraint of members resisting issue change as their identities become deeply intertwined with the SMOs' issues over time (cf. Abbott 2016, p. 13). Beyond the constraint of older and larger SMOs, these descriptive statistics also reflect issue change to serve different purposes for upcoming and established SMOs. Younger and smaller SMOs are more likely to struggle with scarce resources and undertake issues changes primarily to find their niche, establish themselves, and secure their survival. In contrast, older and larger SMOs that are already established do not face similar uncertainties and instead undertake issue changes to improve the chances of success with their current issues. Furthermore, the fact that SMOs with many coalition partners undertake almost only *excursions* supports the argument that coalition partners are interested in ensuring that SMOs do not radically change their issues to maintain the diversity of their coalition and avoid resource competition.[27] The *Students for a Democratic Society*, which had undertaken *diversifications* but restricted itself to undertaking only *excursions* after a considerable increase in coalition partners, constitutes an example of this partner constraint. To summarize, all types of issue changes are predominantly undertaken by young, small, and weakly embedded SMOs. Only *excursions* are also undertaken by old, large, and well-

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[27] Note that this is not an artifact of SMOs with more partners participating in more coalition events, i.e., with two or more SMOs present. Only taking issue changes into account that took place at protest events with only one SMO present reveals a similar pattern.

embedded SMOs. This pattern indicates differences in the constraints, motivation, and susceptibility to field forces of younger and older SMOs when undertaking issue changes.

Conclusion

If SMOs need organizational change to adapt to everchanging environments, there is no more obvious way to do so than by changing what they strive for. Thus far, however, research has primarily focused on changes in the tactics and strategies of SMOs. Even the recent increase of interest in the issues of SMOs among social movement scholars has left the question of issue change almost untouched. Therefore, my aim was to answer the most prevalent questions regarding the prevalence, origins and destination, motivations, and organizational correlates of issue change among SMOs.

To answer these questions, I proposed a field theory that explains how often, why, and which SMOs change their issues. In particular, I argued that issues are positions in the social movement field that are constituted vis-à-vis each other regarding their issue properties, i.e., resources, political opportunities, and media attention, and issue relations, i.e., proximity in content, culture, and status. In the social movement field, SMOs occupy positions by protesting for specific issues, and issue change constitutes a movement between field positions. Based on these conceptualizations, I made three interrelated arguments. First, I argued that issue change is uncommon as it confronts SMOs with a dilemma between the necessity for adaption and risking authenticity that constrain them in whether and how they move in the social movement field. To solve this dilemma, I argued that SMOs undertake temporary issue changes and develop a temporal typology of issue change consisting of four types constituting different ways of moving in the social movement field, i.e., *substitutions*, *diversifications*, *excursions*, and *explorations*. Second, I conceptualized issue change as adaption to an everchanging environment and argued that what SMOs, i.e., their decision-makers, adapt to are the issue

properties and issue relations of their current and potential positions in the social movement field. These issue properties and issue relations constitute field forces that motivate and guide issue changes, i.e., between which issues SMOs change. Third, I argued that how likely SMOs are to respond to these field forces and change their issues depends on their characteristics.

To test this field theory, I leveraged data from the Dynamics of Collective Action and US Policy Agenda Project to follow the issue changes of 4,442 SMOs in the United States between 1960 and 1995. In line with my expectations, issue changes were uncommon and associated with a more extensive lifespan, size, and number of coalition partners for SMOs. Therefore, issue change as a form of adaption to the environment seems crucial for the viability of SMOs. Moreover, SMOs were relatively unconstrained in their movements between issues. However, most issue changes occurred between a few larger social movements. Also, the issue change types were ranked in prevalence according to their radicality and implementation cost. Hence, the more radical and costly an issue change type, the lower its prevalence. This finding supports my argument that the reason why issue changes are uncommon, despite their advantages, is that they nevertheless present SMOs with a dilemma that constrains their movement in the social movement field: While issue changes are likely to enable SMOs to gather and exploit what they need to flourish and to become WUNC by improving their ability to mobilize and form coalitions, they are also likely to raise doubts about their authenticity, identity, and commitment that could severely harm them. It, therefore, makes sense that SMOs prefer to undertake non-radical and ephemeral issue changes that are less harmful and costly.

To test whether issue properties and issue relations constitute field forces that motivate and guide issue changes, I applied TERGMs to four longitudinal issue change networks for each of the four types of issue change. In these longitudinal change networks, issues were nodes, and ties indicated SMOs' movement between issues. The TERGMs support my expectations and reveal three general issue relations and issue properties that motivate and guide all types of issue changes, namely the avoidance of resource competition, the effort to save costs and

minimize authenticity harm, and the exploitation of short-term political opportunities. Furthermore, each type of issue change has particular motivations. *Substitutions* seem motivated and guided by the question of what to do next after experiencing success or failure in reaching issue-specific goals. *Diversifications,* in contrast*,* seem motivated and guided by an effort to increase political attention by linking issues to other issues currently having the focus of politics. *Excursions* seem motivated and guided by efforts to support other social movements, status improvement, or reconnecting to the grassroots. Only for *explorations* were no particular motivations beyond the general ones revealed.

At last, my findings regarding the organizational correlates were also in line with my expectations. SMOs differed in their susceptibility to field forces as their likelihood to undertake issue changes depended on their characteristics. In particular, younger, smaller, and weakly embedded SMOs were more likely to undertake issue changes than their older, larger, and well-embedded counterparts. They also undertook all types of issue change. In contrast, older, larger, and well-embedded SMOs seemed restricted to only undertaking *excursions*, presumably due to organizational inertia, identity constraints, and limitations imposed by coalition partners. This finding also indicates that issue change could serve different purposes for upcoming and established SMOs. Upcoming SMOs struggling for resources undertake even radical issue changes to find their niche and secure their survival, while established SMOs change more subtly to increase their chances of success.

Although I have focused on SMOs in this study, my findings also have implications for social movements as a whole. As issue changes are uncommon, it is unlikely that significant changes within social movements will result from existing SMOs changing, but rather from new SMOs replacing them. The virtue of issue-changing SMOs for social movements might, therefore, not lay in their role as innovators but as conservators due to their vast lifespan. For larger social movements, the fact that resource competition can motivate SMOs to change issues opens up opportunities and risks. The increased mobility of its SMOs could either benefit a

social movement by finding supportive allies (cf. Bailey et al. 2023) or harmfully undermine its cohesion and socio-political legitimacy (see Wang et al. 2019).

I make several contributions in this article. I contribute to the literature on social movements and SMOs by providing the first systematic overview of the prevalence, origins and destinations, and organizational correlates of issue changes among US SMOs between 1960 and 1995. Moreover, I contribute to the growing literature that uses field theory to conceptualize processes involving social movements and SMOs in two ways (Jung et al. 2014; Wang et al. 2019; Gold and Mische 2024). First, I proposed a field theory able to explain how often, why, and which SMOs undertake issue changes, demonstrating that field theory can not only explain the development of the social movement field but also the actions of SMOs therein. Second, I complement existing work on field-level dynamics, such as the co-occurrence of issues in social movement fields, by examining the issue changes of SMOs as an actor-level counterpart that could give rise to such field dynamics. I also contribute to the literature on organizations and organizational change in two ways. First, I have developed a temporal typology of issue change that goes beyond the usual distinction between *substitutions* and *diversifications* and is, in principle, transferable to any other type of organizational change. Second, my conceptualization of organizational change as a dilemma between survival benefits and authenticity harm does provide new insights for the recently growing scholarship on the role of authenticity in organizations and organizational change (e.g., Kovács, Carroll, and Lehman 2014; Verhaal, Hoskins, and Lundmark 2017; Radoynovska and Ruttan 2023). Lastly, my findings inform research on political parties and political actors which also change issues (e.g., Sides 2006; Spoon and Klüver 2014; Ennser-Jedenastik et al. 2022).

Of course, I recognize that this article has limitations that hold opportunities for future research. I could not directly test my theoretical argument that issue changes will likely harm the authenticity of SMOs or benefit their mobilization and coalition-building efforts. Even though my findings indirectly support these considerations, future research should conduct

more rigorous tests. Also, due to the lack of data, I could not consider other important factors likely to motivate whether and how SMOs change their issues, such as intra-organizational processes or interpersonal networks between SMOs. Future research could investigate ethnographically how SMOs implement issue changes in their organizational life to reveal how they handle the issue change dilemma by communicating to insiders and outsiders. In this sense, I hope to provide a fruitful starting point for future research on issue change.

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Appendix

FIG. A1. – Issue Change Networks (Substitution)

Note: Issue change networks (Substitution) for eleven periods. Nodes are issues and ties exist if at least one *substitution* has occurred between two issues in a given period. Arrowheads indicate the direction of the *substitutions*, i.e. from the origin to the destination. ANU: Anti-Nuclear; AFT: Anti-Free Trade, FEM: Women's Rights; PEA: Peace; ENV: Environmental; AFC: African American Civil Rights; LGB: Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights; HIC: Hispanic Civil Rights; NAC: Native American Civil Rights; ASC: Asian American Civil Rights; DIC: Disabled Civil Rights; AIE: Anti-Ethnic/Immigrant; DHR: Pro-Democracy/Human Rights; SOW: Social Welfare; HOU: Affordable Housing/Homelessness.
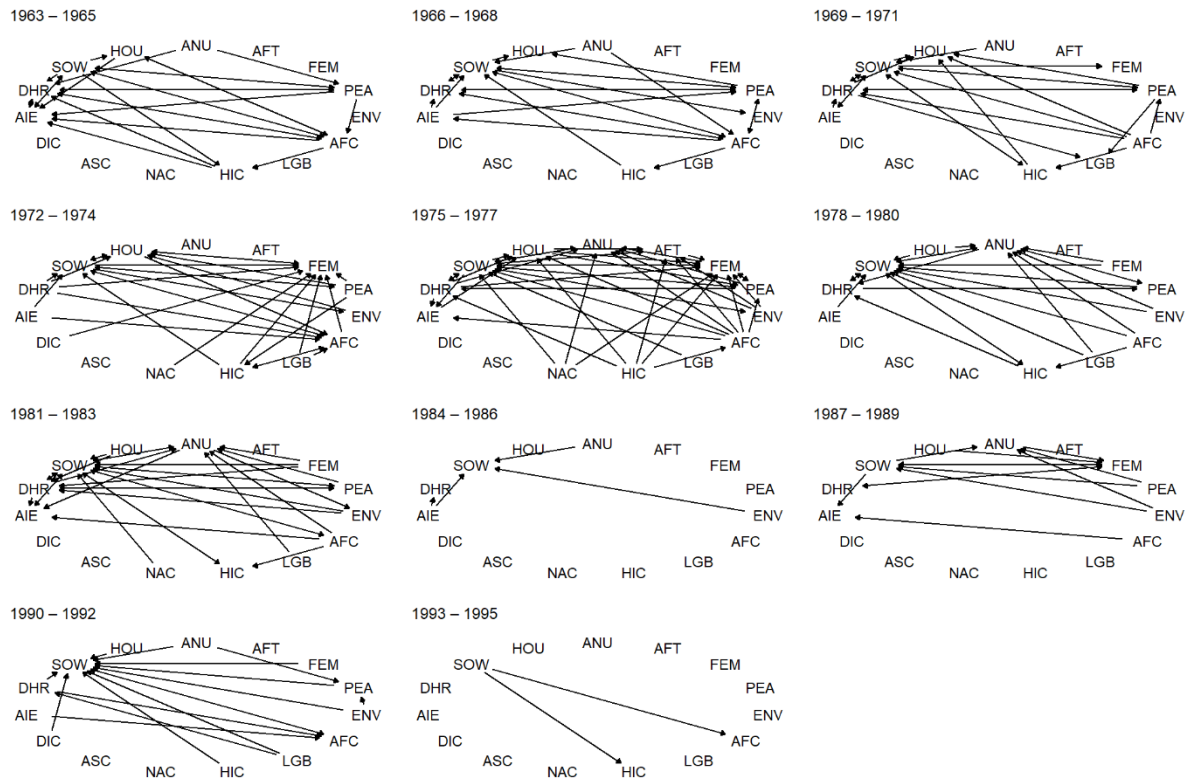
FIG. A2. – Issue Change Networks (Diversification)

Note: Issue Change Networks (Diversification) for eleven periods. Nodes are issues and ties exist if at least one *diversification* has occurred between two issues in a given period. Arrowheads indicate the direction of the *diversifications*, i.e. from the origin to the destination. ANU: Anti-Nuclear; AFT: Anti-Free Trade, FEM: Women's Rights; PEA: Peace; ENV: Environmental; AFC: African American Civil Rights; LGB: Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights; HIC: Hispanic Civil Rights; NAC: Native American Civil Rights; ASC: Asian American Civil Rights; DIC: Disabled Civil Rights; AIE: Anti-Ethnic/Immigrant; DHR: Pro-Democracy/Human Rights; SOW: Social Welfare; HOU: Affordable Housing/Homelessness.
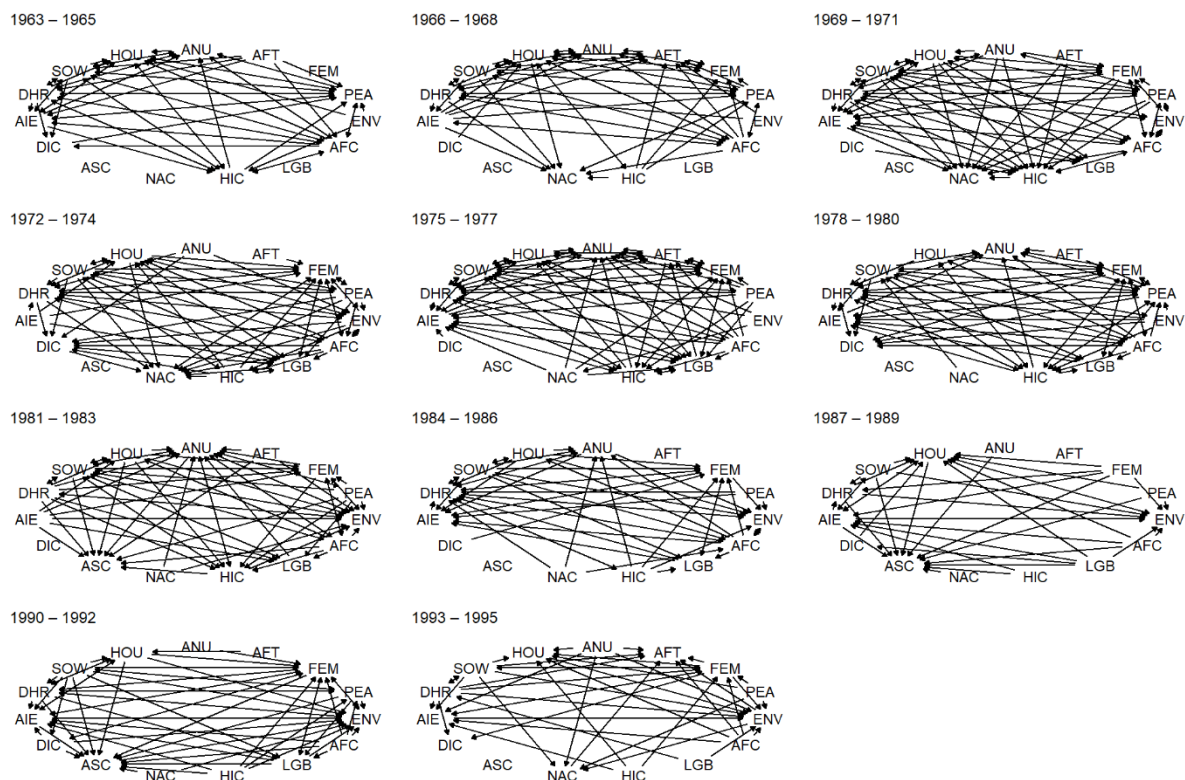
FIG. A3. – Issue Change Networks (Excursion)

Note: Issue Change Networks (Excursion) for eleven periods. Nodes are issues and ties exist if at least one *excursion* has occurred between two issues in a given period. Arrowheads indicate the direction of the *excursions*, i.e. from the origin to the destination. ANU: Anti-Nuclear; AFT: Anti-Free Trade, FEM: Women's Rights; PEA: Peace; ENV: Environmental; AFC: African American Civil Rights; LGB: Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights; HIC: Hispanic Civil Rights; NAC: Native American Civil Rights; ASC: Asian American Civil Rights; DIC: Disabled Civil Rights; AIE: Anti-Ethnic/Immigrant; DHR: Pro-Democracy/Human Rights; SOW: Social Welfare; HOU: Affordable Housing/Homelessness.
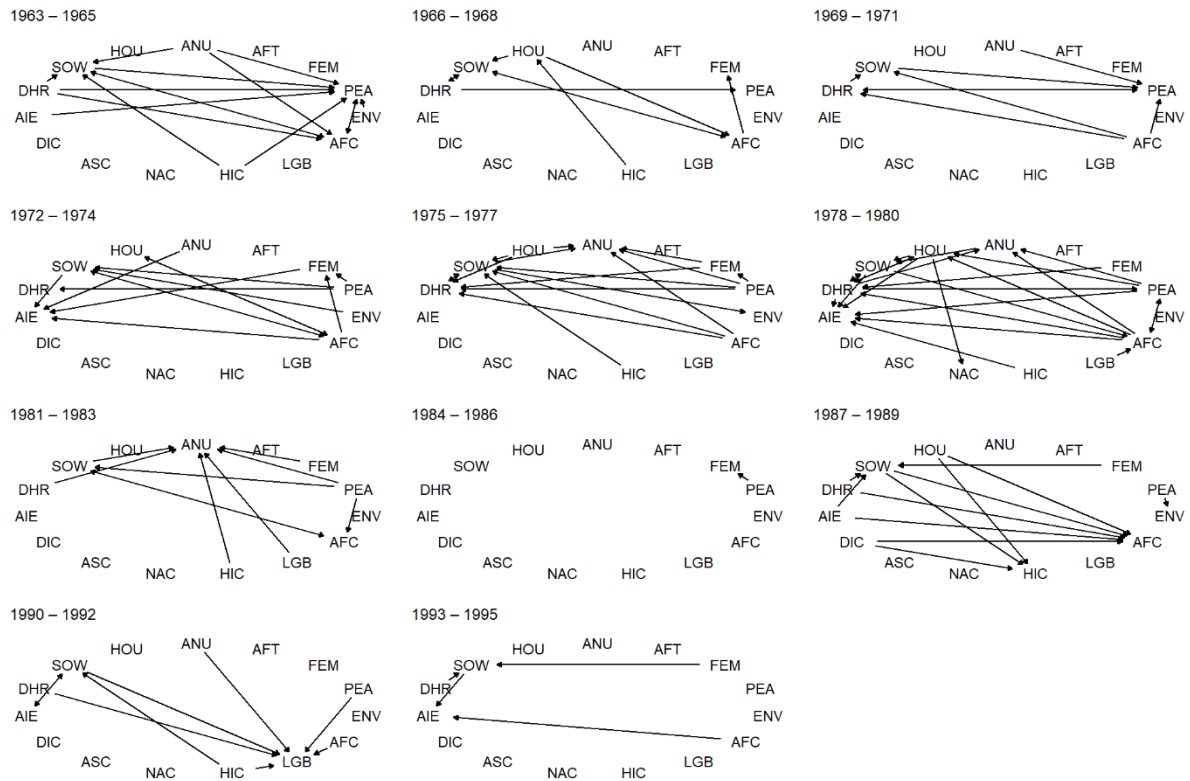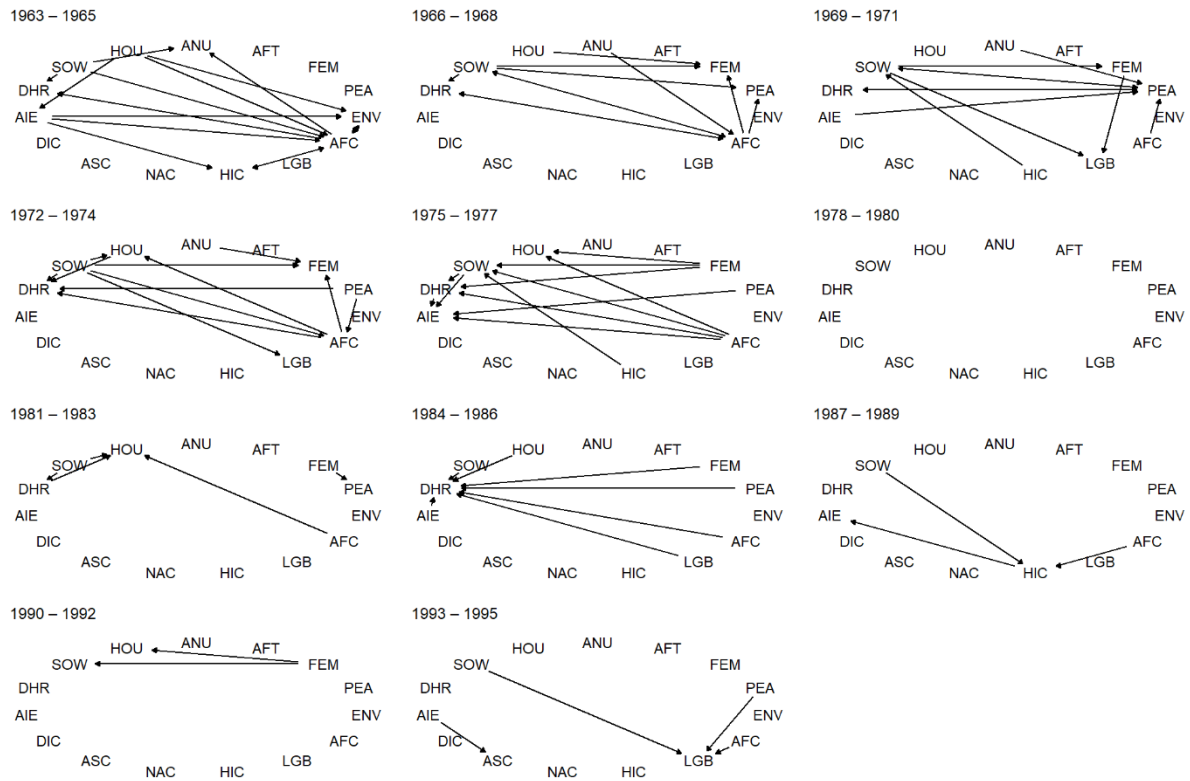
FIG. A4. – Issue Change Networks (Exploration)

Note: Issue Change Networks (Exploration) for eleven periods. Nodes are issues and ties exist if at least one *exploration* has occurred between two issues in a given period. Arrowheads indicate the direction of the *explorations*, i.e. from the origin to the destination. ANU: Anti-Nuclear; AFT: Anti-Free Trade, FEM: Women's Rights; PEA: Peace; ENV: Environmental; AFC: African American Civil Rights; LGB: Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights; HIC: Hispanic Civil Rights; NAC: Native American Civil Rights; ASC: Asian American Civil Rights; DIC: Disabled Civil Rights; AIE: Anti-Ethnic/Immigrant; DHR: Pro-Democracy/Human Rights; SOW: Social Welfare; HOU: Affordable Housing/Homelessness.
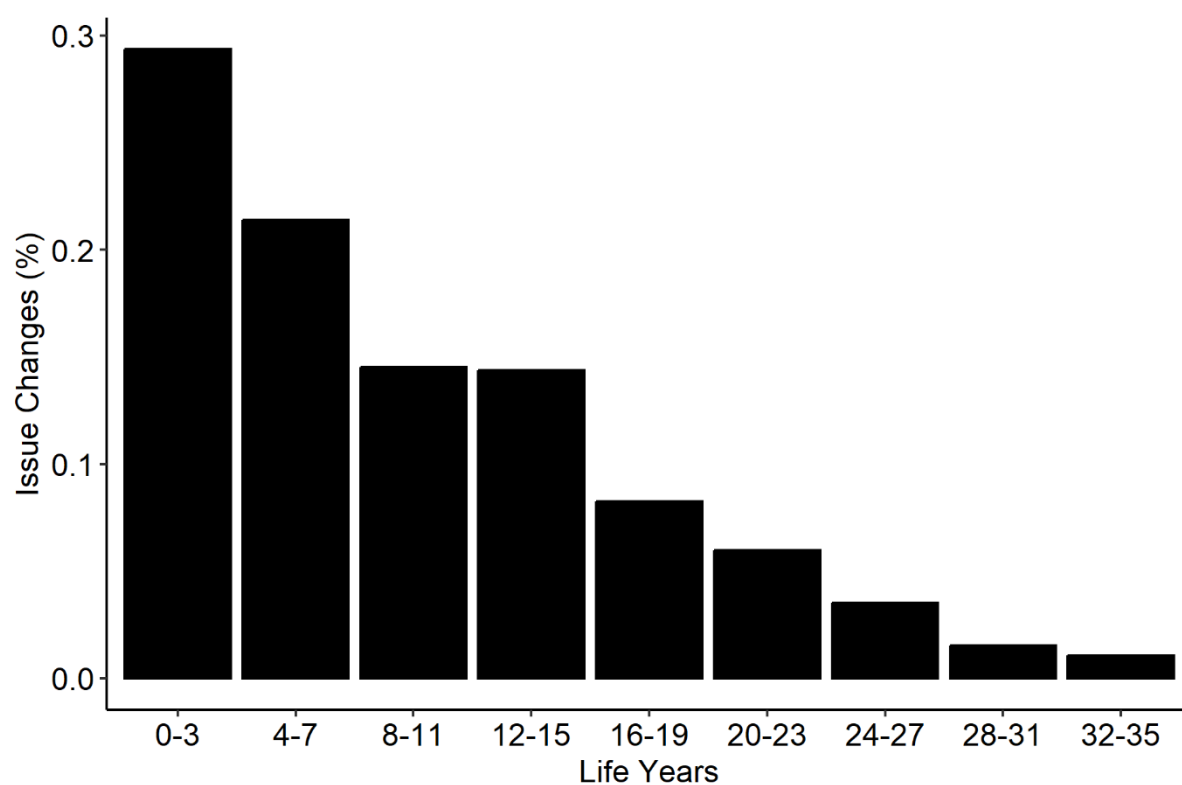
FIG. A5. – Issue Change over SMOs' Life Years
Note: Proportions of issue changes across life course stages undertaken by SMOs with lifespans of at least ten years.
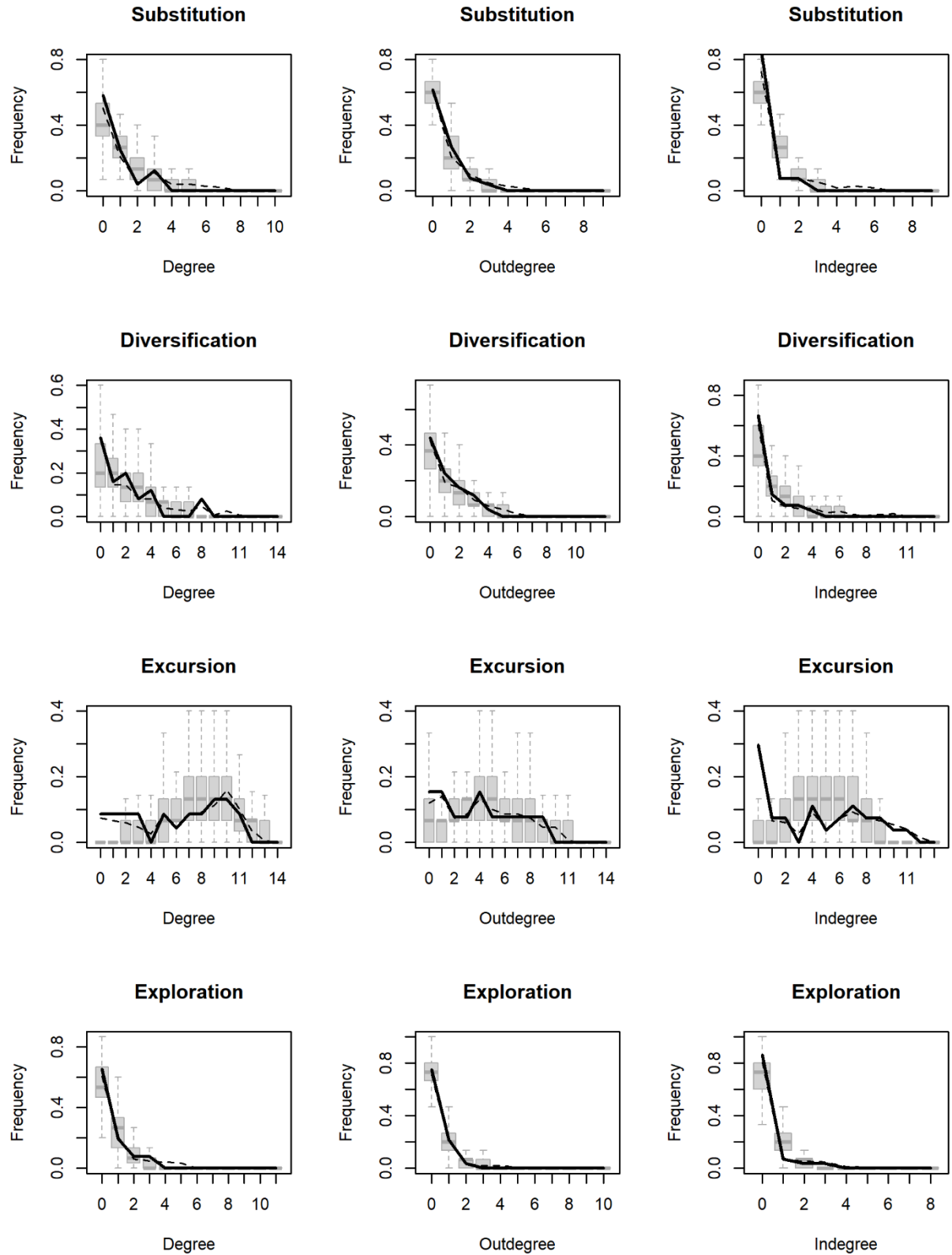
FIG. A6. – TERGM Goodness-of-fit

Note: Goodness of Fit measures of temporal exponential random graph models.
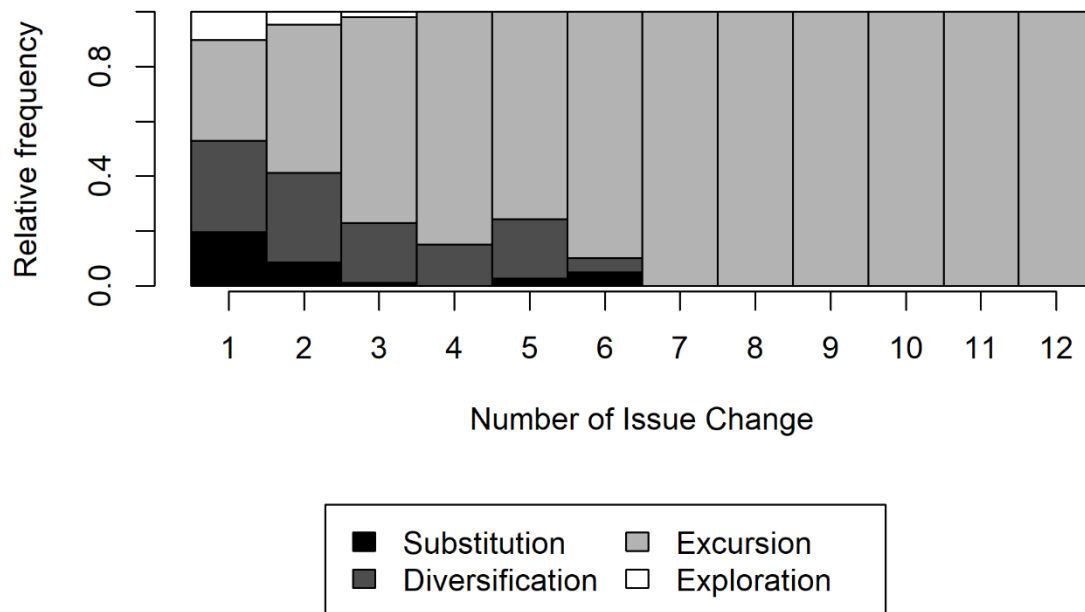
FIG. A7. – Relative Frequencies of Issue Change Over Number of Issue Change

Note: Relative frequencies of *substitutions*, *diversifications*, *excursions*, and *explorations* in relation to the number of issue changes undertaken by SMOs.

Table A1. Temporal Exponential Random Graphs Models

	Substitution	Diversification	Excursion	Exploration
Edges	–3.528***	–2.199**	–1.429***	–3.948***
Reciprocity	0.217	–0.548*	0.271	–0.462
Transitivity	0.781*	0.807***	1.077***	0.943*
Density (Receiver)	0.094	0.258	–0.357*	0.514
Density (Sender)	0.624*	0.559***	0.754***	0.572*
Hearings (Receiver)	0.049	0.012	0.712*	–1.079
Hearings (Sender)	–0.835**	–0.014	–0.575**	–0.485*
SotU (Receiver)	0.431	0.329*	–0.208	0.308
SotU (Sender)	0.202*	–0.101	0.152	0.343
Media (Receiver)	–0.140	0.156	–0.348	0.520
Media (Sender)	0.502***	0.116	0.334**	0.055
Issue proximity	–0.027	0.012	–0.107	–0.105
Cultural proximity	0.502*	0.688**	0.447***	0.832***
Status difference	0.290	–0.178	0.559**	0.001
Status difference sq.	–0.201	0.042	–0.201***	0.067
Memory	0.273*	0.277	0.232**	–0.063
Delayed reciprocity	0.215	0.146	–0.171	–0.310
Time trend	–0.008	–0.159*	–0.117***	–0.120

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Paving the Way to WUNC: How Social Movement Organizations thrive through Issue Change

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Abstract: Social movement organizations must demonstrate their Worthiness, Unity, Numbers, and Commitment (WUNC). But how do social movement organizations become WUNC? In this article, I argue that issue change paves a way to WUNC for social movement organizations. Using data from the Dynamics of Collective Action and the Policy Agenda Project, I estimate longitudinal regressions showing that issue change facilitates the mobilization, coalition-building, and survival chances of 4,442 social movement organizations in the United States between 1960 and 1995. Only so, however, if issue changes are not overly radical, not harming their authenticity. Mediation analyses reveal two mechanisms – adaptation to audiences' interests and crafting hybrid identities – jointly producing these positive effects of issue change. However, adaptation only yields positive effects if issue changes are not overly radical. Hybrid identities only facilitate mobilization and coalition-building but hurt survival chances because of the different problems faced by respective audiences. These results underscore the importance of issue changes for social movement organizations and social movement research.

Introduction

Social movement organizations (SMOs) seek to facilitate desirable societal change. They, therefore, need to convince gatekeepers of change, such as policymakers, of their cause. Charles Tilly (1994) argued that social movements accomplish this task by signaling their Worthiness, Unity, Numbers, and Commitment (WUNC). That is, by demonstrating that they represent a large segment of society that, despite resistance, steadfastly stand together, speaks out, and acts in unison over extended periods. Recent studies supported and extended Tilly's WUNC thesis (e.g., Wouters and Walgrave 2017; Fassiotto and Soule 2017; Wouters 2019; Bailey et al. 2023).

Using a vignette experiment, Wouters and Walgrave (2017) showed that the size and unity of protests persuaded policymakers to take claims seriously and to consider taking action. Fassiotto and Soule (2017), combining newspaper and congressional data, demonstrated that these factors also increased the attention the Women's Rights Movement received from the US Congress. By adding diversity to the WUNC framework, Wouters (2019) showed that demonstrations with large crowds, unity, and diverse protestors elicit more support. Besides replicating these findings, Bailey et al. (2023) shed light on how WUNC works. In particular, they demonstrated that WUNC evaluations mediated the relationship between people's perceptions of social movements and intentions to participate by conferring legitimacy and perceived effectiveness. These studies significantly advanced our understanding of how *being* WUNC nurtures SMOs. For these theoretical advancements, they justifiably started from the assumption that SMOs are WUNC. Thereby, however, these studies left out the practical problem of how SMOs *become* WUNC in the first place. To address this missing link, I put the literature on WUNC into dialogue with the recently emerging research on issue change among SMOs.

Issue change occurs if SMOs change what they protest for, i.e., from Women's Rights to Peace. Although research on organizational change in SMOs began half a century ago (Zald

and Ash 1966), social movement research has largely overlooked issue change, focusing instead on tactical shifts and (de)radicalization (e.g., Messinger 1954; McAdam 1983; Wang and Soule 2012; Wang and Soule 2016). Only recently have scholars begun to explore the antecedents and consequences of SMOs altering their issues, drawing growing interest within the field (see Larson 2009; Wang et al. 2019; Ring-Ramirez and Earl 2021; Kappes Manuscript I).

My main argument in this article is that issue change paves a way to WUNC for SMOs. In particular, I argue that changing issues improves the mobilization, coalition-building, and survival chances of SMOs, improving three dimensions of WUNC. By improving mobilization, issue change increases the *numbers* that SMOs bring to the streets. It strengthens their *unity* (with others) by facilitating their ability to form coalitions. Finally, by extending their longevity, issue change enables SMOs to demonstrate *commitment*. Furthermore, I propose that two mechanisms produce these positive effects of issue change, namely adaptation and crafting hybrid identities.

The first mechanism is that issue change enables SMOs to adapt to changing environments and interests of audiences, such as protestors, other SMOs, and funders, crucial for mobilization, coalition-building, and survival chances, respectively (cf. Kappes in Manuscript I). This willingness and ability to adapt via issue change allows SMOs to appeal continuously to these audiences, improving their mobilization, coalition-building, and survival chances. In contrast, however, issue change might also lead authenticity loss hurting SMOs (cf. Luna 2017; Walker and Stepick 2020). Such losses of authenticity most likely result from issue changes that are overly radical, altering SMOs' programs too severely for protestors, other SMOs, and funders to understand. I, therefore, turn this dilemma between adaptation and authenticity into an empirical question by differentiating between four types of issue changes that differ in how much they alter the programs of SMOs: *substitutions*, *diversifications*, *excursions*, and *explorations* (Kappes Manuscript I).

The second mechanism is that issue change enables SMOs to craft hybrid identities, i.e., starting to protest for multiple issues (Heaney and Rojas 2014). With these hybrid identities they can engage in political brokerage, appealing to protestors with intersectional identities and other SMOs across social movement boundaries, fostering their ability to mobilize and form coalitions. In contrast, however, they are likely to hurt the survival chances of SMOs (for empirical evidence, see Olzak 2022; Olzak and Johnson 2019). These differences in how hybrid identities affect the mobilization, coalition-building, and survival chances of SMOs result from the different problems relevant audiences have to solve to achieve their goals (cf. Martin 2011; Zuckerman 2017). Protestors need to find SMOs whose programs resonate with their personal identities (e.g., Snow et al. 1986). SMOs seeking coalition partners must identify other SMOs with which coalition-building is feasible (Brooker and Meyer 2018; cf. Snow et al. 1986). Similarly, funders must find SMOs matching their desired funding profiles and promising measurable impact (Bartely 2007; McCarthy 2004; Bothwell 2001). Hybrid identities are likely to ease the problems of protestors and other SMOs while worsening those of funders raising concerns about the capacities and commitment of SMOs. Thus, they likely foster the mobilization and coalition-building of SMOs but harm their survival chances.

To test these arguments, I use the Dynamics of Collective Action (DoCA) data set and the Policy Agenda Project to investigate how issue change affected the mobilization, coalition-building, and survival of 4,442 SMOs in the US between 1960 and 1995. In particular, I apply longitudinal regression analysis to assess how different issue change types affect how many protestors SMOs mobilize, how many coalitions they form, and whether they cease to protest. Furthermore, I use mediation analysis to disentangle whether and to which degree the effects of issue changes on mobilization, coalition-building, and survival chances result from adaptation and crafting hybrid identities (Imai et al. 2010; Makovi and Winship 2021).

In line with expectations, issue changes positively affect the mobilization, coalition-building, and survival chances of SMOs. These positive effects, however, mainly occur for non-

radical issue changes, namely *diversifications* and *excursions.* In contrast, *substitutions* and *explorations* mostly do neither positively nor negatively affect the three outcomes. Thus, issue changes foster the mobilization, coalition-building, and survival chances of SMOs, paving a way to WUNC as long as they are not overly radical, undermining authenticity. The mediation analyses reveal that both mechanisms – adaptation and crafting hybrid identities – jointly produce the effect of issue change on mobilization, coalition-building, and survival chances. However, both mechanisms work differently across issue change types and outcomes. As expected, crafting hybrid identities via issue change, regardless of type, positively affects the mobilization and coalition-building of SMOs but has negative effects on survival chances. Therefore, hybrid identities crafted via issue change enable SMOs to engage in political brokerage, fostering their mobilization and coalition-building. For funders, in contrast, hybrid identities raise concerns about the capacities and commitments of SMOs, harming their survival chances. By contrast, adaptation via issue change yields positive returns on all three outcomes only for non-radical issue changes, that is, *diversifications* and *excursions*. Thus, SMOs improve their mobilization, coalition-building, and survival chances by using issue changes to adapt to the changing interests of relevant audiences, but only if these issue changes are not overly radical harming their authenticity.

In this article, I make several contributions to the literature on social movements and organizations. First, complementing existing research on the effects of being WUNC, I demonstrate how SMOs can become WUNC. Second, I underscore the importance of issue changes for SMOs by documenting their positive effects on three important outcomes and uncovering the responsible mechanisms. Third, I contribute to research on authenticity in social movements by showing that overly radical issue changes can harm the authenticity of SMOs rather than benefit them. Finally, by shifting attention to the problems different audiences face to reach their goals, I offer a new solution to the question of why hybrid identities benefit SMOs on some occasions (e.g., Van Dyke 2003; Borland 2008; Heaney and Rojas 2014; Wang et al.

2018) while harming them in others (e.g., Olzak 2022; Olzak and Johnson 2019; Wang et al. 2019).

In the remainder of this article, I outline two mechanisms via which issue change affects the mobilization, coalition-building, and survival chances of SMOs and derive empirical expectations. Then, I introduce the Dynamics of Collective Action (DoCA) data set, elaborate on my analysis strategy, and the operationalization of key constructs. Afterward, I present the results from various regression and mediation analyses alongside empirical examples to illustrate my findings. Lastly, I end the article with a discussion of my findings, their implications, limitations, and opportunities for future research.

Theory

The Willingness and Ability of Adaptation

How can SMOs become WUNC? I argue that issue change paves SMOs a way to WUNC by improving their mobilization, coalition-building, and survival chances. The first mechanism by which I expect issue change to foster the mobilization, coalition-building, and survival chances of SMOs is by enabling them to the changing interests of protestors, other SMOs, and funders. That is, issue change enables SMOs to create and sustain mobilizing resonance with protestors, align their programs with coalition partners, and satisfy the changing interest of funders. In the following, I elaborate on this argument regarding each outcome and address the concern that issue change might also hurt SMOs by undermining their authenticity.

Issue Change as Adaptation

Starting with mobilization, social movement research has shown that successful mobilizing requires SMOs' programs to resonate with the personal identities of protestors. Only if the issues of SMOs align with their concerns do individuals participate in protests (Snow et al. 2018; Snow and Benford 2000; Snow and McAdam 2000; Snow and Benford 1988; Snow et al. 1986). By changing issues, SMOs can create such mobilizing resonance with the personal identities of protestors, fostering mobilization efforts. This willingness and ability to adapt to protestors' interests is vital, considering that what protestors care about changes over time. As the world progresses, issues rise and fall in prominence (Jung et al. 2014). New issues start to increasingly concern people's lives, like Women's Rights, Environmental Protection, and Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights. Other issues experience ups and downs in attention from protestors, such as calls for peace amid war or demands for abolishing nuclear weapons. Issue change enables SMOs to respond to protestors' changing concerns, sustaining resonance with protestors and securing commitment (cf. Stryker 2000; Walsh 2004).

The adaptability that issue change endows SMOs also likely improves their ability to form coalitions with other SMOs. Coalition-building often depends on the alignment of programs between SMOs in such a way that resonates with protestors of both SMOs (Brooker and Meyer 2018; Snow et al. 1986). If alignment is successful, coalitions promise to improve the mobilization and visibility of SMOs (Staggenborg 1986). Alignment, however, is challenging and threatens to alienate protestors if it obscures an SMO's program (Snow et al. 2018; Brooker and Meyer 2018; for empirical examples, see McVeigh et al. 2004; Lindekilde 2008). Moreover, SMOs also need to differentiate themselves for competitive advantage in resource competition, which juxtaposes the need for alignment in coalition-building (Hathaway and Meyer 1993; McCarthy and Zald 1977; cf. Zuckerman 2017). Thus, SMOs need to balance alignment efforts for coalition-building to become more but not too similar. Issue change, I

argue, helps SMOs to align their programs with other SMOs and build coalitions successfully. The reasons for this are threefold. First, issue change can itself be part of the alignment process. Second, issue change makes SMOs accustomed to organizational changes, improving their willingness and ability to align. Finally, the protestors of issue-changing SMOs are used to changes in their programs, which make them more tolerant, increasing SMOs' leeway in the alignment process.

Adaptability via issue change is also likely to increase SMOs' survival chances. SMOs must sustain exchange relationships to access material resources, such as money, equipment, or supplies, necessary to accomplish their tasks and maintenance (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Edwards and McCarthy 2004; Edwards et al. 2018). These maintenance costs are often too high for SMOs to cover via internal mechanisms, such as member contributions, and require external funding from sources such as government contracts, foundation grants, or philanthropy (Corrigall-Brown 2016; Staggenborg 1998; Edwards et al. 2018). However, as the interests of funders shift over time, social movement scholarship has argued that SMOs need the ability to "bend with the wind," i.e., adapt their issues, tactics, and strategies, to sustain funding relationships (Zald and Ash 1966; Powell and Friedkin 1987; Minkoff 1999; Gawerc 2015). I, therefore, argue that issue change constitutes such "bending with the wind" and enables SMOs to build and sustain material resource channels that improve their survival chances.

The Threat of Losing Authenticity and Types of Issue Change

I argue that issue change improves SMOs' mobilization, coalition-building, and survival chances by enabling them to adapt to everchanging environments and interests of audiences. A valid concern, however, is that issue change harms SMOs, as such adaptation undermines their

authenticity (cf. Walker and Stepick 2020; Luna 2017).[1] Such losses of authenticity are especially likely if issue changes do not resonate with SMOs' protestors, other SMOs, and funders. Then, these audiences experience issue change not as reasonable adaptation but co-optation and loss of commitment (Meyer and Tarrow 1998; Fino 2024). If so, SMOs face a dilemma when changing issues between the benefits of adaption and the harms of authenticity loss (Kappes Manuscript I).

I do not argue against the possibility that issue change harms SMOs by undermining authenticity, as it is an empirical question. However, I assert that whether issue changes harm SMOs' authenticity depends on whether SMOs successfully communicate them to different audiences. In general, I expect SMOs to be well-suited for this task. However, the problem of losing authenticity may arise if issue changes become too radical for successful communication, that is, if they alter SMOs' programs so fundamentally that they no longer resonate with protestors, other SMOs, and funders (cf. Minkoff 1999).

Turning this into an empirical question, I distinguish between four types of issue change that differ in radicality: *substitutions*, *diversifications*, *excursions*, and *explorations*. A *substitution* occurs if an SMO replaces its previous issues with new issues, while a *diversification* occurs if it adds new to its previous issues. An *excursion* takes place if an SMO adopts a new issue but only briefly before returning to its previous issues. Lastly, an *exploration* occurs if an SMO drops its new and previous issues and starts to pursue entirely different issues (Kappes Manuscript I). Thus, I define *substitutions* and *explorations* as radical issue changes, as they result in SMOs dropping their old issues entirely. *Diversifications* and *excursions*, in contrast, are non-radical issue changes. Overall, I expect issue change to benefit SMOs by

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[1] By authenticity, I exclusively refer to what Walker and Stepick (2020) term "grassroots authenticity," which results from audiences' perceptions about SMOs' sincerity and moral standing. What they term "institutional authenticity," i.e., evaluations of how well SMOs fit into particular categories, I refer to as issue purity. I use this different terminology because purity, rather than authenticity, serves as the valuation theory underlying Zuckerman's (1999) categorical imperative, forming the foundation of organizational theory's focus on categories and category-spanning (Hannan et al. 2019; Zuckerman 2017; cf. Douglas 1966).

enabling them to adapt to everchanging environments and interests of audiences, with a lack of benefits or harm only to arise, if at all, when issue changes are overly radical, as with *substitutions* and *explorations.*

Crafting Hybrid Identities

The second mechanism I propose is that issue change fosters mobilization and coalition-building of SMOs if they result in hybrid identities, i.e., protesting for multiple issues simultaneously (Heaney and Rojas 2014). Such hybrid identities enable SMOs to act as political brokers appealing to protestors and SMOs from multiple social movements (Heaney and Rojas 2014; Hillmann 2008; Padgett and Ansell 1993). In contrast, however, I argue that crafting hybrid identities via issue change hurts the survival chances of SMOs, harming funders' evaluations of their capacities and commitment (Zuckerman 1999; Hsu 2006; Zuckerman 2017).

From Issue Change to Hybrid Identities to Political Brokerage

Social movement research has shown that hybrid identities foster the mobilization of SMOs, by enabling them to engage in political brokerage, appealing to protestors of multiple social movements (e.g., Heaney and Rojas 2014). Thus, hybrid SMOs can mobilize from a larger pool of protesters. *Women Strike For Peace*, which protested for Women's Rights and Peace, mobilized protestors concerned with either one or both issues (cf. Heaney and Rojas 2014). Similarly, SMOs' hybrid identities appeal to protestors with intersectional identities (Cohen 1999; McCall 2005; Hancock 2007; Strolovitch 2007; cf. Heaney and Rojas 2014), as participation in hybrid SMOs enables the expression, protection, and development of these intersectional identities (cf. Stryker 2000; Walsh 2004). Finally, the embeddedness of hybrid

SMOs in multiple social movements makes them especially suited to perform such political brokerage. In contrast to single-issue SMOs attempting to mobilize across social movement boundaries, hybrid SMOs possess the information, expertise, and authority necessary to make their programs successfully resonate with protestors of multiple social movement (Heaney and Rojas 2014). Hence, I argue that issue change nurtures the mobilization efforts of SMOs via crafting hybrid identities.

In parallel fashion, hybrid identities crafted via issue change are also likely to foster the coalition-building efforts of SMOs. As in the case of mobilization, hybrid identities grant SMOs a broader pool of potential coalition partners from multiple social movements. *Women Strike for Peace*, for instance, formed coalitions with SMOs from the Women's Rights Movement, such as the *National Organization for Women*, and the Peace Movement, such as *Peace Action*. A larger pool of SMOs as potential coalition partners also enhances the chances of finding one with which program alignment, essential for coalition-building, is feasible. Hybrid SMOs are also likely well-suited to achieve such alignment of programs requiring the connection of multiple issues, as due to their embeddedness in multiple social movements, hybrid SMOs have practice in bridging issues (cf. Snow et al. 1986). They will likely have more experience finding connections between issues and ways of aligning their programs with coalition partners. Consistent with these arguments, Van Dyke (2003) and Borland (2008) showed that engaging for multiple issues led to more coalition-building among US college and Argentinian Women's Rights groups, respectively. Thus, I argue that issue change nurtures the mobilization efforts of SMOs via crafting hybrid identities.

Why Hybrid Identities Hurt Survival Chances

In contrast, I argue that hybrid identities resulting from issue changes harm the chances of survival of SMOs. While hybrid identities facilitate mobilization and coalition-building, they can also undermine the perceived legitimacy of SMOs in the eyes of the funders they rely on for survival (Zuckerman 1999; Zuckerman 2017). Such an illegitimacy discount likely arises from the difficulty funders have categorizing hybrid SMOs into any particular social movement, impairing their ability to understand and anticipate the actions of hybrid SMOs and casting doubt on their capacities to reach their goals as Jack-of-all trades (Hsu 2006; Hsu et al. 2009; Kovács and Hannan 2010; Hannan et al. 2019). As a result, I argue that funders are less likely to support hybrid SMOs than single-issue SMOs, harming their chances of survival.

Of course, the question is why hybrid SMOs should not suffer a similar illegitimacy discount regarding mobilization and coalition-building. The reason why I do not expect hybrid identities to harm these two outcomes is that protestors and other SMOs, the relevant audiences for mobilization and coalition-building, in contrast to funders, are unlikely to dismiss hybrid SMOs for blending issues (see Walker and Stepick 2020 for a related argument). This disparity exists because these audiences use different theories of valuation to judge SMOs, such as issue purity, based on the problems they must solve to reach their objectives (Zuckerman 2017; cf. Martin 2011: 138). That is, if protestors want to join an SMO, they need to find one whose program resonates with their personal identities. Similarly, if SMOs want to build coalitions, they need to find other SMOs with whom program alignment is possible. In both cases, dismissing SMOs based on issue impurity, thus having a hybrid identity, does not help to achieve these objectives.[2] Rather, for the reasons I have outlined above, hybrid identities are likely to solve the problems associated with mobilization and coalition-building.

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[2] Of course, as Zuckerman (2017: 50) points out, the fact that protestors and other SMOs do not judge SMOs based on issue purity only implies that they apply another rather than no theory of valuation. Although beyond the scope of this article, grassroots authenticity, as outlined above, is a promising candidate (cf. Walker and Stepick 2020).

Funders, in contrast, have different objectives and problems. They need to find SMOs that fit the profile of what they want to fund regarding particular issues and promise to have a measurable impact (Bartely 2007; McCarthy 2004; Bothwell 2001; cf. Walker and Stepick 2020). The ambiguity of hybrid identities bedevils both objectives by hampering funders' understanding of the goals of SMOs and casting doubt on their capacity to reach them as Jack-of-all-trades (Hsu 2006; Hsu et al. 2009; Kovács and Hannan 2010; Hannan et al. 2019). By contrast, focusing on issue purity helps to solve these particular problems for the objectives of funders. Previous studies by Olzak and Johnson (2019) and Olzak (2022) support these arguments empirically by showing that ambiguity harmed the survival chances of Environmental SMOs and terrorist organizations, respectively. Hence, I argue that hybrid identities crafted via issue change harm the survival chances of SMOs.

Mechanism Interplay and Expectations

The two mechanisms I proposed – the ability of adaptation and crafting hybrid identities – via which issue change benefits SMOs are neither mutually exclusive nor reducible to each other. Issue-changing SMOs may adapt via crafting hybrid identities, and hybrid identities may ease adaptation to everchanging environments and interests of audiences. At the same time, however, issue change may improve SMO's survival chances via adaptation and harm it via crafting hybrid identities. Therefore, I treat the two mechanisms theoretically and analytically distinct by using mediation analysis (Imai et al. 2010; Makovi and Winship 2021). Hence, I decompose the total effect of issue change on the three outcomes into a direct effect representing the adaptation mechanism and an indirect effect representing the hybrid identity mechanism.

From these theoretical arguments, I expect issue change to have a, first and foremost, positive effect on the mobilization, coalition-building, and survival of SMOs. Negative consequences of issue change, I expect to occur, if at all, for radical issue changes, that is,

substitutions and *explorations*. Finally, I expect the crafting of hybrid identities via issue change to have a positive effect on SMOs' mobilization and coalition-building and a negative on their survival.

Data

Dynamics of Collective Action, 1960 – 1995

To answer my research questions, I use the Dynamics of Collective Action (DoCA), one of social movement research's most established data sets. The DoCA data set includes information on over 23,000 protest events in the United States between 1960 and 1995 that the New York Times had covered. Notably, the data set provides the names of up to four participating SMOs and the raised claims for close to 10,000 protest events. In total, the DoCA includes 4,442 SMOs whose issues I can trace from one protest event to the next, allowing me to trace their issue changes and their mobilization, coalition-building, and survival.[3] For my analysis, I transform the unit of analysis of the DoCA data set from the protest- to the SMO-year level.[4]

In particular, the DoCA data set provides 158 particular claims (e.g., 'Equal Pay,' 'Anti-Draft,' or 'Rainforest Preservation') that SMOs make at protest events nested in 15 broader issues: 'Anti-Nuclear (ANU),' 'Anti-Free Trade (AFT),' 'Women's Rights (FEM),' 'Peace (PEA),' 'Environmental (ENV),' 'African American Civil Rights (AFC),' 'Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights (LGB),' 'Hispanic Civil Rights (HIC),' 'Native American Civil Rights (NAC),' 'Asian American Civil Rights (ASC),' 'Disabled Civil Rights (DIC),' 'Anti-Ethnic/Immigrant (AIE),' 'Pro-

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[3] Note that I use an updated list of the SMOs in DoCA provided by Jennifer Earl as the data set in its original form contains some SMOs multiple times due to typos and changing names available at https://sites.udel.edu/jearl/data-resources.

[4] Note that I only include "active" SMO-years, i.e., years in which SMOs did protest at least once.

Democracy/Human Rights (DHR),' 'Social Welfare (SOW),' and 'Affordable Housing/Homelessness (HOU).'[5]

The DoCA, like any newspaper data set, comes with selection and description bias problems that threaten the validity of my results (Earl et al. 2004; Davenport 2009; Andrews and Caren 2010). Comparing newspaper coverage of protest events to a representative sample, Beyerlein et al. (2018) document that although newspapers accurately describe protest events, they are more likely to cover those with larger crowds, taking place in capitals, and on salient issues. Therefore, I am likely to underrepresent issue change in rural areas involving less salient issues and not capture how they affect SMOs with low levels of mobilization. These biases, however, do not undermine my analysis, as rural areas inherently offer fewer opportunities for enhancing mobilization, coalition-building, and survival chances.

Policy Agenda Project

To complement the DoCA data set with information on political and media contexts, I incorporate data from the US Policy Agenda Project (US-PAP) (Baumgartner and Jones 2002). The US-PAP systematically compiles time-series data on the attention the US government and media outlets devote to specific policy issues. It includes datasets covering the New York Times, congressional hearings, roll call votes, executive orders, and State of the Union speeches, among others, all documenting the policy issues discussed since 1947. Since the DoCA project provides a translation key to align issues raised by SMOs at protest events with the policy issue codes in the US-PAP, I use the latter to operationalize political opportunities and media attention that could confound the relationship between issue change and SMOs' mobilization, coalition-building and survival chances.

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[5] These issues are not provided by the DoCA data set but by Wang et al. (2019, p. 428), who induced them by applying a community-detection algorithm on a co-occurrence network of claims, where two particular claims had a tie if they have been jointly protested for at a protest event at least once.

Operationalization and Methods

Issue Change and Types of Issue Change

To detect issue changes, I compare the issues an SMO protests for at any of its protest events with its issue portfolios from all its previous protest events. To capture their strategic dimension, radicality, and threat to authenticity, I differentiate between four types of issue change, namely, *substitutions*, *diversifications*, *excursions*, and *explorations*. To identify those, I trace an SMO's new and old issues for three years after an issue change.

Over these three years, a *substitution* occurs if an SMO replaces its previous issues with new issues, while a *diversification* occurs if new issues are added to the previous issues. An *excursion* occurs if an SMO adopts a new issue only briefly before returning to its previous issues. Lastly, an *exploration* occurs if an SMO drops its new and previous issues and starts to pursue entirely different issues (see Appendix A for further details).

Based on that, I generate four binary variables indicating whether an SMO has conducted the respective issue change type in a given year. For the binary variables to have a value of 1, however, the SMO must have only conducted the respective issue change type and no other to not blend their effects. For example, an SMO only has coded 1 for *substitution* in a given year if it has conducted at least one *substitution* but no *diversification*, *excursion*, or *exploration*.[6]

Mobilization

I use the number of protestors attending an SMO's protest event to operationalize mobilization. The DoCA reports the exact number of protestors if reported in the New York Times. Otherwise,

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[6] Note, however, that using a less restrictive operationalization that allows for multiple types of issue change yields similar results.

the number of protestors was estimated and categorized into six categories: 1 (1-9 protestors); 2 (10-49 protestors); 3(50-99 protestors); 4 (100-999 protestors); 5 (1,000 - 9,999 protestors); and 6 (10,000 or more protestors). Thus, I recoded the exact reported number of protestors into these six categories to avoid losing observations. Then, to assess an SMO's mobilization annually, I selected the highest category of protesters it mobilized in a given year.

To test whether issue change affects the mobilization of SMOs, I estimate ordered logistic regression models using the *feologit* command in Stata with SMO- and year-fixed effects (Baetschmann et al. 2020). Furthermore, I run separate regression models for each issue change type. I also estimate linear regression models as robustness checks and for consistency with the mediation analyses (further described below) based on linear regression models.

Coalition–Building

To operationalize an SMO's ability to build coalitions, I use the number of new coalition partners it has in a given year. New coalition partners are SMOs with which an SMO jointly protested for the first time. Thus, I exclude coalition partners from previous years, even if they jointly protested with an SMO in the given year. I make this choice to ensure that the measure primarily reflects an SMO's ability to build new coalitions rather than merely sustain existing ones.

To test whether issue change affects the coalition-building of SMOs, I apply Poisson regression models with SMO- and year-fixed effects. In particular, I estimate separate regression models for each issue change type. Here, I also estimate linear regression models for consistency with the mediation analysis and as robustness checks.

Survival

To operationalize the survival chances of SMOs, I construct a binary variable "organizational failure" that has a value of 1 in a given year if an SMO ceases to protest in a given year and 0 otherwise. This operationalization, established in social movement research (e.g., Soule and King 2008), captures if SMOs have failed as protest organizations, which is my primary interest.

To test how issue change affects SMO's survival chances, I rely on event history analysis. In particular, I use linear probability models with fixed effects for SMOs and years to assess whether SMOs that change issues are more likely to cease protesting in a given year than their non-changing counterparts (cf. Minkoff 1999; Soule and King 2008).[7]

Mediation Analysis: New Hybrid Identity

The models discussed above estimate the total effects of different issue change types on SMOs' mobilization, coalition-building, and survival. To dissect, however, if and how much the two mechanisms – adaptation and crafting hybrid identities – contribute to these total effects, I rely on mediation analysis (Imai et al. 2010; Makovi and Winship 2021). In particular, mediation analysis enables the decomposition of the total effect a variable X has on Y into a direct effect, i.e., the effect that X has directly on Y, and an indirect effect, which is the effect that X has on Y through a mediator, M. Thereby, the direct effect is the effect of X and Y conditional on M, and the indirect effect is the product of the effect of X on M and the effect of M on Y (see equation 1).

(1) Total Effect = Direct Effect $(X \rightarrow Y \mid M)$ + Indirect Effect $(X \rightarrow M \times M \rightarrow Y)$.

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[7] I use linear probability models rather than logistic models, as the latter produced unreliable estimates due to convergence problems. Using linear models for binary outcomes comes with the risk of out-of-range predictions and heteroskedastic error terms threatening the validity of statistical inference. Both problems bedevil the current analysis. However, only to a negligible degree, with only roughly 11% out-of-range predictions and statistical significance robust to heteroskedastic standard errors.

In the context of this article, X refers to issue change, and Y represents the three SMO outcomes of mobilization, coalition-building, and survival, respectively. As the mediator M, I construct the variable "new hybrid identity" as a binary variable, which indicates whether an SMO has started to protest for multiple issues in a given year. That is, "new hybrid identity" takes on a value of 1 if an SMO protests for multiple issues in a given year and has not done so in the previous year and 0 otherwise.[8]

I use the *mediation* package in R by Tingley et al. (2014) to decompose the total effects of the four types of issue change on SMOs' mobilization, coalition-building, and survival into their direct and indirect effects through crafting hybrid identities. Hereby, I assume that the direct effects capture the adaptation mechanism, whereas the indirect effect represents the crafting hybrid identities mechanism. To this end, the mediation package requires the specification of an outcome- and a mediation model. The outcome model estimates the effect of issue change on the SMOs' mobilization, coalition-building, and survival chances conditional on the mediator "new hybrid identity" and control variables. The mediation model, in turn, estimates the effect of four issue change types on SMOs crafting "new hybrid identities." With this information, the mediation package calculates direct and indirect effects and tests their statistical significance via the construction of bootstrap confidence intervals based on 1,000 iterations.[9]

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[8] The rationale for the condition of no hybrid identity in the previous year is to address concerns about temporal order, as hybrid identities may also increase the likelihood of issue change, and to ensure that I capture the effects of hybrid identities resulting specifically from issue change. Note, however, that a simpler specification of hybrid identity without this condition yields similar results.

[9] I use linear regressions for each outcome and mediation model in the mediation analysis for computational feasibility. Although the mediation package is compatible with a wide range of R packages to estimate statistical models, it does not support packages that can absorb fixed effects such as *fixest* (Berge et al. 2021). However, estimating the fixed effects for SMOs and years using dummy variables results in unresolvable computational issues. I, therefore, demean the data absorbing the SMO- and year-fixed effects using the *fixest* package and use this demeaned data in the mediation analysis. This strategy, however, requires the use of linear models even if other models would be more appropriate, as the demeaning does not work to account for fixed effects in non-linear models.

Controls

I control for a variety of potential confounders in the relationship between issue changes and the mobilization, coalition-building, and survival chances of SMOs. I account for the size of SMOs using the number of cities they have protested in during a given year. To operationalize the age of SMOs, I take the difference between the given year and the year of their first protest event in the DoCA data set. Then, to avoid collinearity with year-fixed effects, I recoded age into a categorical variable with three levels: 1 (0-2 years); 2 (3-9 years); and 3 (10 years or more).[10] To account for resource competition, I operationalize the *density* of SMOs' social movements as the number of SMOs working on SMOs' primary issues in a given year.[11] Using information from the US-PAP, I use the number of congressional hearings on SMOs' primary issue and the number of times this issue was mentioned in State of the Union speeches to control for short-term and long-term political opportunities, respectively.[12] To account for media attention, I use the number of paragraphs that cover SMOs' primary issues from a sample of New York Times articles in a given period available in the US-PAP in a given year. Further, I control for SMOs' average cultural proximity to other SMOs measured by their average Jaccard similarity in protest tactics with any other SMOs in a given year. Lastly, I account for SMOs' use of disruptive tactics with a binary indicator, which takes on a value of 1 if SMOs have used disruptive protest tactics in a given year and 0 otherwise (see table A2 in Appendix A). Table 1 report descriptive statistics on all variables in the analysis.

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[10] Note that I calculate ages that are too low for SMOs that already existed before 1960. However, I do not assume this bias to affect my results as the average lifespan of SMOs in the DoCA data is two years. Furthermore, I assume the number of cities to be a valid proxy of size as it is more likely that larger SMOs are active in more cities than that smaller SMOs are excessively mobile.

[11] I define an SMO's primary issue as the one it has protested for most frequently in a given year.

[12] I interpret congressional hearings as short-term political opportunities as they indicate the early stages of a policy-making process (Eissler and Jones 2019) and State of the Union speeches as long-term political opportunities as they lay out the overall policy agenda of an Administration.

Table 1. Descriptives Statistics

	N	Mean /Median	SD	Min	Max
Dependent Variables					
Mobilization	7,138	3[a]	1.40	1	6
New Partners	7,138	0.98	1.56	0	32
Organizational Failure	7,138	0.62	0.49	0	1
Independent Variables					
Substitution	7,138	0.01	0.10	0	1
Diversification	7,138	0.02	0.13	0	1
Excursion	7,138	0.04	0.20	0	1
Exploration	7,138	0.01	0.08	0	1
New Hybrid Identity	7,138	0.08	0.28	0	1
Controls					
Age[b]	7,138	1[a]	0.76	1	3
Size	7,138	2.27	1.75	1	53
Density	7,138	40.78	32.07	0	126
Congressional Hearings	7,138	69.26	80.34	0	267
State of the Union	7,138	13.65	20.07	0	100
Media	7,138	164.55	179.25	0	664
Average Tactical Overlap	7,138	0.80	0.32	0	0.98
Disruptive Tactics	7,138	0.01	0.10	0	1

Note: The unit of analysis is the "SMO-Active Year," i.e., each year for each SMOs in which they protested at least once. [a] = Median; [b] = Recoded in three categories, i.e., 1 = 0 – 2 Years; 2 = 3 – 9 Years; and 3 = 10 Years or more.

Results

Mobilization

I start with how issue change affects the mobilization of SMOs. Figure 2 shows coefficient plots visualizing the effects of four issue change types on mobilization from ordered logistic and linear regression models.[13] In line with expectations, the non-radical issue change types – *diversifications* and *excursions* – positively affect the mobilization of SMOs. A few examples illustrate these findings. In 1968, for example, *Youth Against War and Fascism* conducted a *diversification* adopting Social Welfare issues and were able to mobilize over 10,000 protestors.

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[13] I base my interpretations on the ordered logistic regression models, especially concerning statistical significance, as they are more appropriate modeling choice than the linear models. Note, however, that both regression models produce similar effect patterns, which justifies conducting the mediation analysis using linear models.

In the previous five years, it could not mobilize more than 1,000 protestors. The *Sierra Club*

also conducted a *diversification*, adopting Anti-Nuclear claims in 1976 and mobilized hundreds

of protestors – more than twice as much as in the previous year. With regard to *excursions*, the

AFL-CIO adopted Environmental claims for a short period in 1974 and was able to mobilize

over 10,000 protestors. In the previous three years, the *AFL-CIO* had not mobilized more than

100 protestors. In 1963, *the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People* also

conducted two *excursions* and brought more than 10,000 protestors to the streets – ten times

more than in the previous two years.
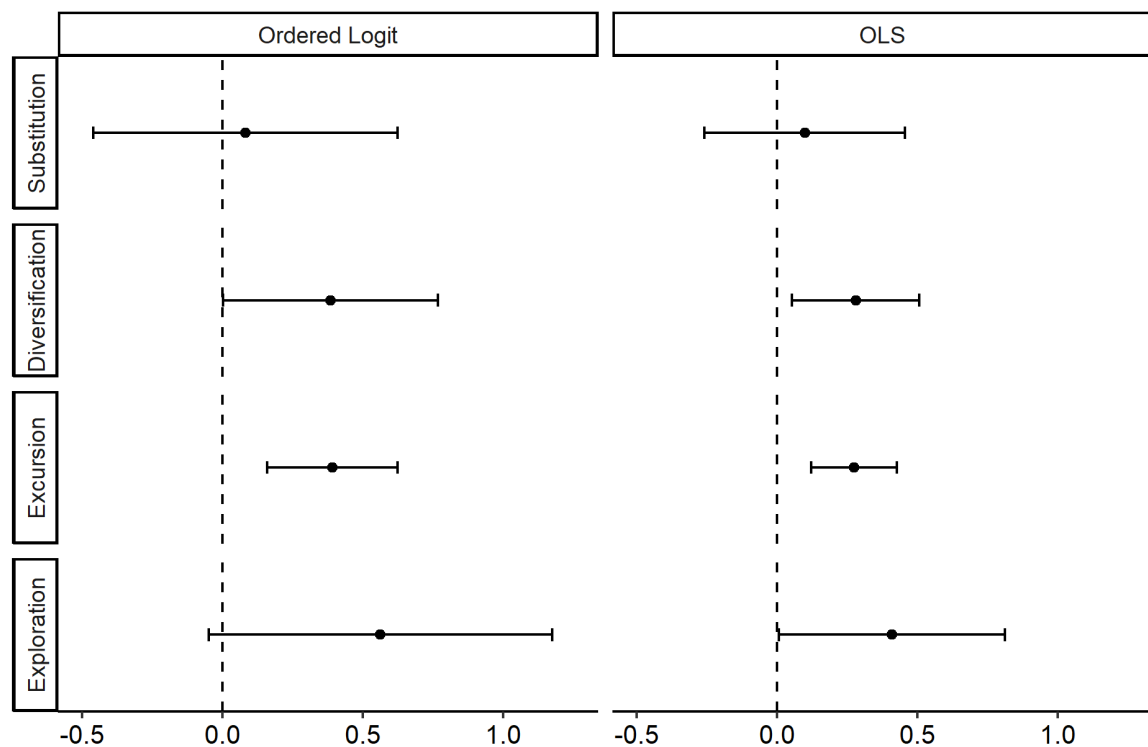
FIG. 2. – Effect of Issue Change on Mobilization
Note: Ordinal logit and linear regression models estimating the effect of four types of issue changes on mobilization including all control variables. Fixed effects for SMOs and years. Standard errors are clustered by SMOs. Coefficient values are taken from Table B1 in Appendix B.

Furthermore, *substitutions* and *explorations* not showing positive effects on

mobilization also provide initial support for the expectation that radical issue changes do not

benefit SMOs, as they potentially undermine their authenticity. However, they also do not

negatively affect mobilization. These null effects are likely the result of how past and potentially future protestors of SMOs differ in their reaction to radical issue changes. As insiders, past protestors are more likely to understand *substitutions* and *explorations*, preventing loss of authenticity and punishment. In contrast, as outsiders, future protestors have more difficulty making sense of radical issue changes, hurting the authenticity of SMOs and undermining positive returns.

I turn to the mediation analysis to investigate whether and to which degree these positive effects result from SMOs' adaptation and crafting of hybrid identities. Table 2 reports the mediation analysis results for the relationship between mobilization and all four types of issue change. For each issue change type, the table shows the direct effect representing the adaptation mechanism (e.g., Substitution → Mobilization) and the indirect effect representing the hybrid identity mechanism (e.g., Substitution → New Hybrid → Mobilization). The direct effect results show that only adaptations via *excursions* yield positive returns to mobilization. For the remaining issue change types, including *diversification*s, direct effects are not significant. This non-effect is surprising given that *diversifications* are non-radical issue changes, which should be less likely to harm SMOs' authenticity. It suggests that protestors view long-lasting changes to SMOs' programs with suspicion and only reward SMOs' adaptations if they are temporary. Otherwise, they raise doubts about SMO's authenticity. The indirect effects that issue change unfolds on mobilization via the crafting of hybrid identities paint a different picture. In line with expectations, crafting hybrid identities fosters the mobilization of SMOs regardless of the type of issue change – even for *substitutions* whose total effects are insignificant. These results imply that, except for *excursions*, positive returns to mobilization result from crafting hybrid identities rather than adaptation. They also support the idea that hybrid identities resulting from issue change enable SMOs to engage in political brokerage, mobilizing protestors from multiple social movements and with intersectional identities.

Table 2. Mediation Analysis – Mobilization

	Coefficient	95% Conf. Int.	Mechanism
Substitution			
SUB → MOB	0.056	[–0.27; 0.37]	Adaptation
SUB → NIH → MOB	0.042**	[0.01; 0.08]	Hybrid Identity
Diversification			
DIV → MOB	0.202	[–0.01; 0.42]	Adaptation
DIV → NIH → MOB	0.076***	[0.04; 0.12]	Hybrid Identity
Excursion			
EXC → MOB	0.208**	[0.06; 0.35]	Adaptation
EXC → NIH → MOB	0.063***	[0.03; 0.09]	Hybrid Identity
Exploration			
EXP → MOB	0.344	[–0.07; 0.72]	Adaptation
EXP → NIH → MOB	0.063***	[0.02; 0.11]	Hybrid Identity

Note: Mediation analysis results conducted with the R package mediation. Outcome and mediation models are estimated using linear regression models on demeaned data to account for SMO- and year fixed effects and include all control variables. Legend: SUB = Substitution; DIV = Diversification; EXC = Excursion; EXP = Exploration; NIH = New Hybrid Identity; MOB = Mobilization.

Thus, issue change fosters the mobilization of SMOs. It does so primarily by enabling SMOs to craft hybrid identities that resonate with protestors from multiple social movements and with intersectional identities. Adaptations, however, that do not result in hybrid identities only yield positive returns for *excursions*, presumably because any long-lasting alteration of SMOs' programs raises doubts about their authenticity among future protestors.

Coalition-Building

I next turn to how issue change affects the coalition-building of SMOs. As for mobilization, figure 3 shows the total effects for each issue change type on coalition-building from Poisson and linear regression models.[14] The effect patterns and empirical examples largely mirror those of mobilization. Thus, in line with expectations, *diversifications* and *excursions* – the non-radical issue change types – positively affect SMOs' coalition-building. These positive effects are substantial. The Poisson models suggest that conducting *diversifications*, *excursions*, or

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[14] Here, I orient my interpretations on the Poisson regression models, as they are the more appropriate modeling choice compared to the linear models. Furthermore, the fact that both models produce similar effect patterns justifies the use of linear regression models in the mediation analysis.

explorations increases an SMO's expected number of new partners in a given year by 35.9%, 43.5%, respectively. Again, the previous examples illustrate these results. In 1968, when *Youth Against War and Fascism* conducted its *diversification*, it was also able to form coalitions with six new partners, five more than in the previous year. When the *Sierra Club* conducted its *diversification* in 1976, they found three new coalition partners compared to none in the previous year. The *AFL-CIO* formed four new partnerships when it conducted its *excursion* in 1976, the largest number in seven years. Most impressively, when the *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People* conducted two *excursions* in 1963, it found 28 new coalition partners – the second-highest amount in the data.
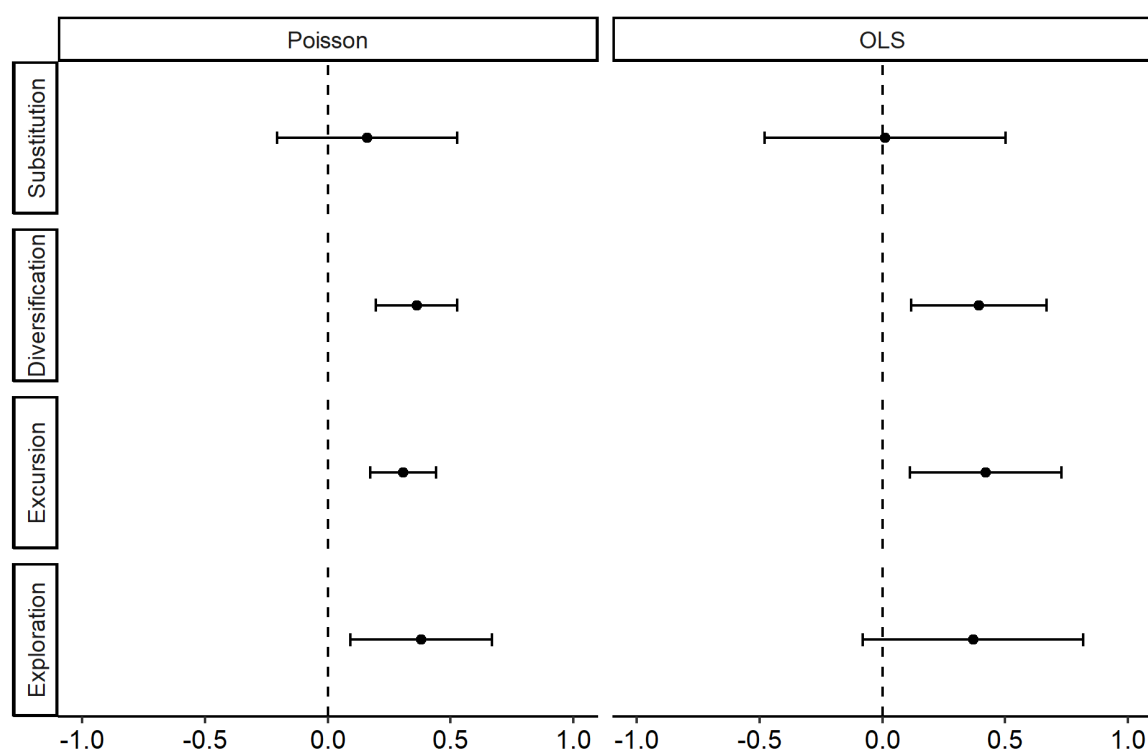
FIG. 3. – Effect of Issue Change on Coalition-Building
Note: Poisson and linear regression models estimating the effect of four types of issue changes on coalition-building including all control variables. Fixed effects for SMOs and years. Standard errors are clustered by SMOs. Coefficient values are taken from Table B2 in Appendix B.

Other than for mobilization, however, *explorations* have a positive effect on coalition-building. In 1977, for instance, the *Glassboro Education Association* conducted an exploration

and found six new coalition partners, more than ever before and since. *Substitutions*, in contrast, do not affect the coalition-building of SMOs.

The mediation analysis results in table 3 reveal that issue change affects SMOs' coalition-building via adaptation and crafting hybrid identities almost similar to mobilization. The only difference is that *diversifications*, besides *excursions*, also have a positive direct effect on coalition-building, suggesting that other SMOs, as potential coalition partners, are more tolerant towards long-lasting issue changes than protestors. Presumably, they are less concerned with the past and present of SMOs and more future-oriented than protestors and welcome long-lasting issue changes, especially if they make program alignment possible enabling a lasting coalition.[15] However, the insignificant direct effects of *substitutions* and *explorations* imply that if SMOs change their issues too radically, other SMOs doubt their authenticity and stay away too. [16]

Table 3. Mediation Analysis – Coalition-Building

	Coefficient	95% Conf. Int.	Mechanism
Substitution			
SUB → NPA	–0.046	[–0.41; 0.42]	Adaptation
SUB → NIH → NPA	0.057***	[0.02; 0.11]	Hybrid Identity
Diversification			
DIV → NPA	0.291*	[0.05; 0.53]	Adaptation
DIV → NIH → NPA	0.102***	[0.06; 0.15]	Hybrid Identity
Excursion			
EXC → NPA	0.338*	[0.06; 0.63]	Adaptation
EXC → NIH → NPA	0.083***	[0.04; 0.13]	Hybrid Identity
Exploration			
EXP → NPA	0.284	[–0.13; 0.70]	Adaptation
EXP → NIH → NPA	0.086***	[0.03; 0.15]	Hybrid Identity

Note: Mediation analysis results conducted with the R package mediation. Outcome and mediation models are estimated using linear regression models on demeaned data to account for SMO- and year fixed effects and include all control variables. Legend: SUB = Substitution; DIV = Diversification; EXC = Excursion; EXP = Exploration; NIH = New Hybrid Identity; NPA = New Partners.

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[15] This difference in temporal orientation between SMOs looking for coalition partners and protestors searching for an SMO to join likely results from the different problems they need to solve – program alignment and resonance with personal identities, respectively. While program alignment is a process taking place in the future, the resonance between SMOs' programs and protestors' identities is either given or not in the present.

[16] Note that the explanation of why *substitutions* and *explorations* do not have negative effects from the mobilization analysis is unlikely to hold for coalition-building, as I explicitly model new coalitions. Instead, the absence of negative effects likely results from a floor effect, as SMOs find roughly only one new coalition partner per year.

Furthermore, the positive indirect effects suggest that crafting hybrid identities via issue change, regardless of type, positively affects SMOs' ability to find new coalition partners. These results support the idea that hybrid identities, formed through issue change, foster SMOs' coalition-building by enabling political brokerage, attracting coalition partners from multiple social movements, and providing experience in bridging issues – improving their ability to align programs with coalition partners.

The mediation analyses also shed light on why *explorations* have a positive total effect on coalition-building but not mobilization and why, in contrast, *substitutions* do not also positively affect coalition-building. For *explorations*, crafting hybrid identities matters more for coalition-building than mobilization, mediating 23% compared to 15% of total effects, respectively. Thus, *explorations* yield positive total effects on coalition-building but not mobilization because of the higher importance of crafting hybrid identities for building coalitions relative to mobilization. *Substitutions*, in contrast, do not positively affect coalition-building, as their effects depend even stronger on crafting hybrid identities – mediating 55% of their total effects – but are also the least likely to lead to hybrid identities. Only 27% of *substitutions* resulted in hybrid identities compared to 45%, 40%, and 38% for *diversifications*, *excursions*, and *explorations*.

These results suggest that conducting issue changes turns SMOs into skilled coalition-builders. These positive effects of issue change on coalition-building primarily unfold via crafting hybrid identities, enabling SMOs to find coalition-partners from multiple social movements. However, adaptation via issue change also fosters SMOs' coalition-building by improving their ability to align their programs to those of coalition partners, as long as issue changes are not too radical to raise doubts about their authenticity.

Survival

Finally, I turn to how issue change affects the survival of SMOs. The coefficient plot in figure 4 visualizes the total effects of the four types of issue change on organizational failure in a given year. As expected, the non-radical issue changes – *diversifications* and *excursions* – negatively affect organizational failure, suggesting that they prolong SMOs' lives by enabling them to adapt to changing environments and funder interests. In particular, the linear probability models imply that SMOs conducting *diversifications* and *excursions* are 8% and 9% less likely to cease protesting in a given year than non-changing SMOs.
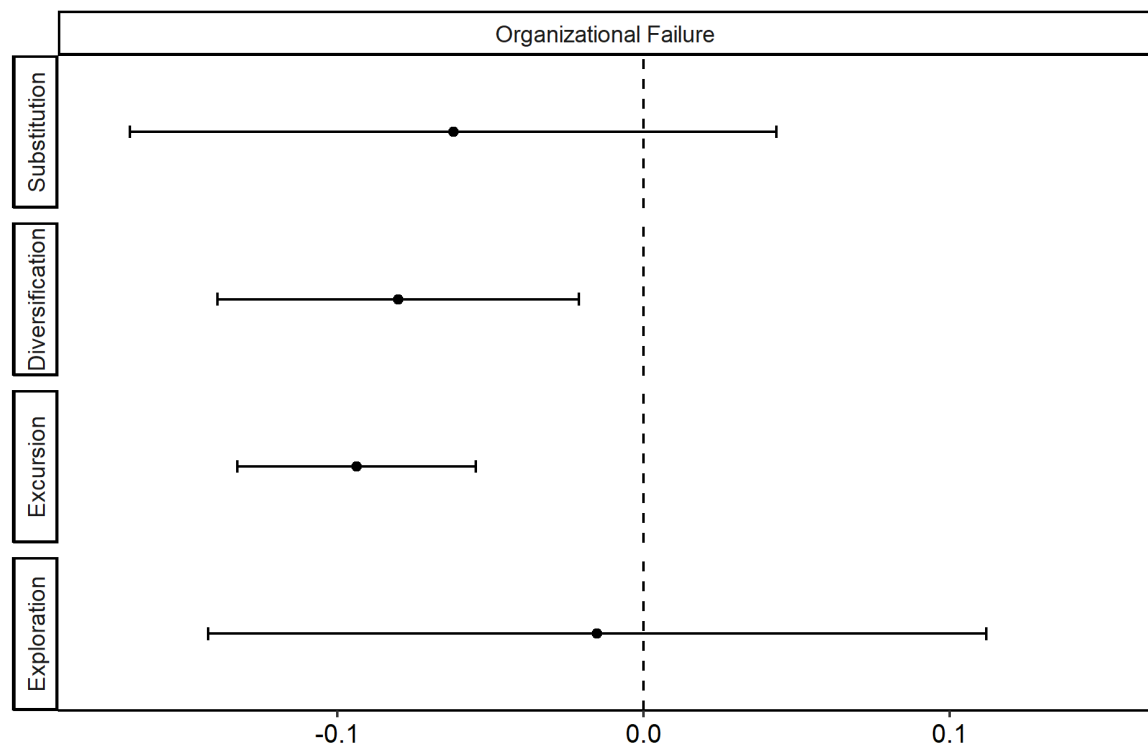
FIG. 4. – Effect of Issue Change on Organizational Failure
Note: Linear regression models estimating the effect of four types of issue changes on organizational failure including all control variables. Fixed effects for SMOs and years. Standard errors are clustered by SMOs. Coefficient values are taken from Table B3 in Appendix B.

In contrast, *substitutions* and *explorations* show no significant effects on SMOs' survival. These null effects suggest that although radical issue changes enable SMOs to adapt to the interests of funders, they also raise doubts among funders about their commitment and

capacity to reach their goals.[17] For instance, funders might appreciate that SMOs align with their interests by conducting *substitutions* but also have concerns about how successfully they can work on entirely new issues without prior experience. Similarly, *explorations* might make funders fear that SMOs will soon again abandon their issues, making them hesitate to provide financial support.

To disentangle how issue change affects the survival of SMOs, table 4 reports the mediation analysis results. The effect patterns of the direct effects resemble those of the total effects: *Diversifications* and *excursions* have negative direct effects, whereas *substitutions* and *explorations* do not directly affect organizational failure. This resemblance supports the previous interpretations, which have centered on SMO's adaptation to funders' interests via issue change and the latter's evaluation. Furthermore, how issue change affects the survival of SMOs so far echoes the results of the mobilization- and coalition-building analysis. Issue change enables SMOs to adapt to various audiences that differ in their tolerance of radical issue changes.

As expected, however, this homogeneity breaks when considering the indirect effects that issue changes unfold on organizational failure via crafting hybrid identities. In contrast to mobilization and coalition-building, the positive indirect effects for all issue change types imply that crafting hybrid identities via issue change negatively affects the survival chances of SMOs. These negative effects suggest that funders, unlike protestors and other SMOs, do not reward but punish SMOs for crafting hybrid identities. This punishment likely occurs because hybrid identities do not solve the fundamental problem that funders face, namely finding SMOs that fit a particular profile of working on a particular issue and promising a measurable impact. On the contrary, they make finding a solution more difficult, raising doubts about SMOs' capacities

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[17] Again, I assume that radical issue change does not diminish survival chances due to statistical floor effects. In the DoCA data, SMOs already fail at such a rapid rate (80% within the first year) that further acceleration is unlikely.

as Jack-of-all-trades and commitment in the eyes of funders – quite similar to radical issue changes. Although these negative effects of hybrid identities occur regardless of how they were crafted, they are overwhelmed by the positive effects of adaptation in the case of *diversifications* and *excursions*, resulting in positive total effects. Likewise, the total effects of *substitutions* and *explorations* are presumably not negative because they are less likely to lead to hybrid identities than the other two types of issue changes.

Table 4. Mediation Analysis – Organizational Failure

	Coefficient	95% Conf. Int.	Mechanism
Substitution			
SUB → FAI	–0.073	[–0.16; 0.02]	Adaptation
SUB → NIH → FAI	0.011***	[0.00; 0.02]	Hybrid Identity
Diversification			
DIV → FAI	–0.100***	[–0.15; –0.04]	Adaptation
DIV → NIH → FAI	0.022***	[0.01; 0.03]	Hybrid Identity
Excursion			
EXC → FAI	–0.111***	[–0.15; –0.08]	Adaptation
EXC → NIH → FAI	0.022***	[0.01; 0.03]	Hybrid Identity
Exploration			
EXP → FAI	–0.029	[–0.13; 0.08]	Adaptation
EXP → NIH → FAI	0.016***	[0.01; 0.03]	Hybrid Identity

Note: Mediation analysis results conducted with the R package mediation. Outcome and mediation models are estimated using linear regression models on demeaned data to account for SMO- and year fixed effects and include all control variables. Legend: SUB = Substitution; DIV = Diversification; EXC = Excursion; EXP = Exploration; NIH = New Hybrid Identity; FAI = Failure.

In summary, these results suggest that issue changes improve the survival chances of SMOs by enabling them to adapt to the changing interests of funders upon which they rely for financial support. These positive effects, however, are offset when issue changes are so radical that they raise concerns about SMOs' capacities and commitments. If issue changes also result in hybrid identities, these doubts become even stronger.

Conclusion

Social movement research has shown that being WUNC is essential for SMOs. However, how can SMOs become WUNC in the first place? In this article, I argued that issue change promises to pave a way to WUNC for SMOs by improving their mobilization, coalition-building, and survival chances. Specifically, I proposed that two mechanisms – adaptation and crafting hybrid identities – produce these positive effects of issue change. In particular, I argued that issue change enables SMOs to adapt to changing environments and interests of protestors, other SMOs, and funders – the audiences crucial for SMOs' mobilization, coalition-building, and survival. Also, SMOs can use issue change to craft hybrid identities, which allow them to engage in political brokerage, appealing to protestors with intersectional identities and other SMOs across social movement boundaries. However, I also reasoned why both mechanisms might backfire under certain conditions. Thus, overly radical issue changes, altering SMOs' programs too severely to be understandable for audiences, potentially harm the authenticity of SMOs. Similarly, hybrid identities raising concerns about SMOs' capacities and commitment among funders could hurt the survival chances of SMOs.

To test these arguments, I used the Dynamics of Collective Action data set to investigate the relationship between the issue changes and the mobilization, coalition-building, and survival of 4,442 SMOs in the US between 1960 and 1995. Using longitudinal regressions, I showed that issue change positively affects how many protestors SMOs mobilize, how many new coalitions they form, and whether they continue to protest. Thus, issue change paves the way to WUNC for SMOs. These positive effects, however, mainly occurred for non-radical issue changes, such as *diversification* and *excursions*. In contrast, radical issue changes, such as *substitutions* and *explorations*, did not foster SMOs' mobilization, coalition-building, and survival chances, supporting the idea that overly radical issue changes harm the authenticity of SMOs. However, radical issue changes do also not negatively affect SMOs. Presumably, these null effects result

from past protestors of SMOs understanding even radical issue changes and the fact that SMOs' coalition-building and survival chances could hardly be lower.

Applying mediation analyses, I disentangled whether and how extensively the two mechanisms of adaptation and crafting hybrid identities produced the positive effects of issue change for SMOs. As expected, while both mechanisms are jointly at work, their effects differ across issue change types and outcomes. In particular, adaptation only improves the mobilization, coalition-building, and survival chances of SMOs if conducted via non-radical issue changes, such as *diversifications* and *excursions*. For mobilization specifically, even only adaptations via *excursions* yield positive returns. Presumably, because, in comparison to other SMOs and funders, protestors are more past-oriented, care the most about the authenticity of SMOs, and, therefore, are suspicious of long-lasting changes in the program of SMOs. Adaptations via *substitutions* and *explorations* do not affect the three outcomes. Thus, issue change enables SMOs to adapt to changing environments and audiences' interests, fostering their mobilization, coalition-building, and survival chances. Only so, however, if issue changes are not overly radical to hurt their authenticity.

In contrast, crafting hybrid identities via issue change affects the mobilization, coalition-building, and survival of SMOs regardless of issue change type. These effects, however, differ between outcomes. As expected, crafting hybrid identities fosters mobilization and coalition-building but hurts the survival chances of SMOs. Thus, hybrid identities enable SMOs to engage in political brokerage, mobilizing protestors with intersectional identities and forming coalitions with SMOs from multiple social movements. In contrast, they do not appeal to funders but hurt their evaluations of SMOs' capacities and commitment. Presumably, these differences in how hybrid identities affect SMOs result from differences in whether they facilitate solving the problems different audiences face pursuing their goals or not. Thus, while hybrid identities make it easier for protestors to resonate with SMOs' programs and for SMOs to align their programs in coalition-building, they make it harder for funders to decide whether

they fit their funding interests. The overall positive effects of *diversifications* and *excursions* on SMOs' survival chances, however, suggest that, at least for non-radical issue changes, the positive effects of adaptation outweigh the negative consequences of hybrid identities.

Therefore, this article makes several contributions to the literature on social movements and organizations. First, I complement existing research on the positive effects of being WUNC by demonstrating how SMOs can *become* WUNC (Tilly 1994; Wouters and Walgrave 2017; Fassiotto and Soule 2017; Wouters 2019; Bailey et al. 2023). In particular, I show how issue change facilitates the mobilization, coalition-building, and survival of SMOs, thus paving a way to WUNC by strengthening three of its four dimensions: numbers, unity, and commitment. Second, by empirically demonstrating these positive effects, I underscore the importance of issue change for SMOs and social movement research recently taking an interest in them (e.g., Larson 2009; Wang et al. 2019; Ring-Ramirez and Earl 2021; Kappes Manuscript I). I also provided empirical evidence for two mechanisms – adaptation and crafting hybrid identities – responsible for the effects of issue change. Third, I contribute to research on the authenticity of SMOs (e.g., Luna 2017; Walker and Stepick 2020). Demonstrating that issue change only unfolds positive effects if they are not overly radical, I show that authenticity is a genuine concern for SMOs. Finally, I offer a novel solution to the puzzle of why hybridity benefits SMOs in some contexts, e.g., mobilization (Heaney and Rojas 2014) or coalition-building (Van Dyke 2003; Borland 2008), while harming them in others, e.g., survival (Olzak and Johnson 2019; Olzak 2022) and socio-political legitimacy (Wang et al. 2019). In particular, I argued that the effects of hybridity on a given outcome depend on whether it helps relevant audiences solve their problems and achieve their goals (cf. Martin 2011; Zuckerman 2017; Walker and Stepick 2020).

Finally, I acknowledge several limitations of this article, providing avenues for future research. First, I did not have a proper measurement of SMOs' authenticity. Instead, I used the radicality of issue changes as a proxy for potential loss of authenticity, thus capturing

authenticity by its observed consequences rather than by itself. Even though my findings justify this reasonable assumption and that, so far, no systematic, quantitative measure of SMOs' authenticity exists, future research should attempt to develop and use direct measures of authenticity. Second, I only derived stylized goals and problems of different audiences of SMOs, i.e., protestors, other SMOs, and funders, from established social movement literature. Although I do not doubt the validity of these stylized problems and how they shape audiences' reactions to issue changes, future research should improve their empirical grounding using qualitative and experimental methods. Third, I did not have a direct measure for the adaptation mechanism but identified it as the direct effect in the mediation analysis. Even though this decision is reasonable as the issue changes, first and foremost, are adaptations, it is impossible to rule out that other possible mechanisms have inflated these direct effects. Furthermore, lacking a direct measure of adaptation made it impossible to model and test the mechanism interplay of adaptation and crafting hybrid identities. Thus, future research should develop direct adaptation measures via issue change and detail how they affect mobilization, coalition-building, and survival in concrete empirical settings.

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Appendix A

To determine whether an SMO has undertaken an issue change at a protest event, I compare the issues it puts forth at that protest event with its issue portfolio from all previous protest events. That is, an issue change takes place if an SMO protests for an issue for the first time, i.e., an issue it has never previously protested for, at a protest event.

To determine the type of an issue change, i.e., *substitution*, *diversification*, *excursion*, or *exploration*, I trace whether an SMO keeps or drops its set of old issues O, i.e., the origin issues for which an SMO has already protested in the past, and its set of new issues N, i.e., the destination issues for which an SMO protest for the first time, at each subsequent protest event within three years after an issue change.[18] In particular, I calculate the stability of the old issue set s_O and new issue set s_N as the share of all subsequent protest events within the next three years at which an SMO put forth issues that fall into the set of old issues of O and set of new issues N, respectively.

For illustration, if an SMO protests for its set of old issues O at three out of five and its set of new issues N at four out of five subsequent protest events after an issue change, s_O takes on the value of 0.6 and s_N the value of 0.8. Values of s_O and s_N range from 0 to 1, where a value of 0 indicates that within three years after an issue change, an SMO never protests for any issue from the issue sets O and N, respectively, and a value of 1 that an SMO protests for any issues in the issue sets O and N, respectively, at each subsequent protest event. As such extreme values are rare, I set a threshold of lower than 0.2 to determine that an SMO drops its issue sets O and N, respectively.[19] Hence, if $s_O < 0.2$, the SMO drops its old issues in O over time.

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[18] This restriction of the period of subsequent protest events is necessary as I treat issues changes as strategic maneuvers. I chose a window of three years as this corresponds to the average length of protest cycles in the DoCA data (cf. Wang and Soule 2016).

[19] I choose this relatively low threshold to be conservative regarding the decision when an SMO has dropped an issue set. However, results are robust to changes in the threshold to 0.1 and 0.3. Also, a threshold of 0 identifies all issue changes as *diversifications*. As in this case, an SMO keeps its old issue set O and new issue set S by default, regardless of whether it protests for them even once in the next three years.

Similarly, if $s_N < 0.2$, the SMO drops its new issues in N over time. In substantive terms, for an SMO to keep its sets of old issues O or new issues N, it needs to protest for these respective sets at least at one-fifth of its subsequent protest events in the next three years after an issue change. Depending on whether SMO has kept or dropped its old and new issues, I classify the change as *substitution*, *diversification*, *excursion*, or *exploration*. Table A1 in the appendix provides examples, definitions, and ranges of the stability values s_O and s_N for each issue change type.

Table A1. Definitions, Examples, and Classification of Issue Change Types

	Substitution	Diversification	Excursion	Exploration
Example	$s_O = 0.0$ $s_N = 0.8$	$s_O = 0.8$ $s_N = 0.6$	$s_O = 0.8$ $s_N = 0.0$	$s_O = 0.0$ $s_N = 0.0$
	Event 5: No / Yes — 3 Years	Event 5: No / Yes — 3 Years	Event 5: Yes / No — 3 Years	Event 5: No / No — 3 Years
	Event 4: No / No	Event 4: Yes / No	Event 4: Yes / No	Event 4: No / No
	Event 3: No / Yes	Event 3: Yes / Yes	Event 3: No / No	Event 3: No / No
	Event 2: No / Yes	Event 2: Yes / Yes	Event 2: Yes / No	Event 2: No / No
	Event 1: No / Yes	Event 1: Yes / No	Event 1: Yes / No	Event 1: No / No
	Change Event: Yes / Yes	Change Event: Yes / Yes	Change Event: Yes / Yes	Change Event: Yes / Yes
	Old Issues / New Issues	Old Issues / New Issues	Old Issues / New Issues	Old Issues / New Issues
Definition	An SMO drops its set of old issues O but keeps its set of new issues N over time.	An SMO keeps both its set of old issues in O and its set of new issues N over time.	An SMO keeps its set of old issues O but drops its set of new issues N over time.	An SMO drops both its sets of old issues O and its set of new issues in N over time.
Events with Old Issues (%)	Less than 20% $s_O < 0.2$	At least 20% $s_O \geq 0.2$	At least 20% $s_O \geq 0.2$	Less than 20% $s_O < 0.2$
Events with New Issues (%)	At least 20% $s_N \geq 0.2$	At least 20% $s_N \geq 0.2$	Less than 20% $s_N < 0.2$	Less than 20% $s_N < 0.2$

Note: The old issue set O contains all issues an SMO had before a change event, i.e., a protest event with an issue change. The new issue set N contains the new issues an SMO adopts at the change event. In the examples, the SMOs organize five protest events in the three years after their change events, but the number varies in reality. 'Yes' and 'No' indicate whether an SMO protested for its old issues O and new issues N at a particular protest event. If the share of protest events with the old issues set s_O or the new issue set s_N is lower than 0.2, an SMO has dropped its old issues O or new issues N respectively.

Table A2. Disruptive and Non-disruptive Tactics

Disruptive tactics	Non-disruptive tactics
Bell ringing; Fasting hunger strike; parading chariots; Holding signs, picket line, placarding; Procession or marching; Sloganeering/chanting; Bed-racing; Civil disobedience; Drumming; Sit-ins; Bank-ins, shop-ins, penny-ins; Withholding obligations; Physical attack; Verbal attack or threat; Blockade; Loud noisemaking; Yelling/shouting; Building takeover; Looting; Damaging property; Kidnapping/hostage taking; Meeting disruptions, Walkouts	Bannering; Bicycling as part of procession; Candlelighting; Canvassing; Cross carrying; Dances; Debate; Discussion; Dramaturgical presentation skit; Film showing; Fireworks display; Leafleting; Meditation; Petitioning; Photo exhibiting; Praying; Reading or recitation; Selling paraphanelia; Moments of silence; Speechmaking; Vigiling silent protest; Worshipping; Wreathing, laying wreaths; Displaying goods/symbolic displays; Press conference; Dedication; Musical and/or vocal performance; Filming events; Recruiting or evangelizing; "Shantytowns"; Lobbying; Polling; Singing collectively; Torch-passing; Letter-writing campaign; Lawsuits; Meeting candidates; Flag waving; Distributing goods; Describing project

Note: I adopted this classification from Wang and Piazza (2016: 1686).

Appendix B

Table B1. Two-Way Fixed Effects Regression Models on Mobilization

	Substitution		Diversification		Excursion		Exploration	
	O–Logit	OLS	O–Logit	OLS	O–Logit	OLS	O–Logit	OLS
Issue Change	0.081	0.098	0.385[*]	0.280[*]	0.390[**]	0.274[***]	0.562	0.408[*]
	(0.276)	(0.182)	(0.195)	(0.131)	(0.118)	(0.086)	(0.312)	(0.220)
Age (Ref. 0 – 2 Years)								
3 – 9 Years	–0.141	–0.082	–0.148	–0.086	–0.154	–0.088	–0.145	–0.085
	(0.111)	(0.073)	(0.112)	(0.073)	(0.111)	(0.073)	(0.111)	(0.073)
10+ Years	0.037	0.040	0.022	0.033	0.024	0.035	0.024	0.035
	(0.193)	(0.131)	(0.194)	(0.131)	(0.193)	(0.130)	(0.193)	(0.131)
Size	0.384[***]	0.103[***]	0.380[***]	0.103[***]	0.374[***]	0.097[**]	0.384[***]	0.103[***]
	(0.099)	(0.012)	(0.098)	(0.012)	(0.099)	(0.012)	(0.099)	(0.012)
Density	0.003	0.002	0.003	0.002	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Congressional Hearings	–0.001	0.000	–0.001	0.000	–0.001	0.000	–0.001	0.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
State of the Union	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.003	0.002	0.003	0.002
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Media	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.000)
Average Tactical Overlap	–0.145	–0.121	–0.153	–0.126	–0.150	–0.122	–0.148	–0.123
	(0.166)	(0.099)	(0.167)	(0.099)	(0.167)	(0.099)	(0.167)	(0.099)
Disruptive Tactics	0.173	0.066	0.185	0.072	0.189	0.0776	0.178	0.069
	(0.258)	(0.193)	(0.259)	(0.193)	(0.255)	(0.193)	(0.260)	(0.193)
N	3,276	7,138	3,276	7,138	3,276	7,138	3,276	7,138

Note: Ordered logit (O–Logit) and OLS regressions with fixed effects for SMOs and years. Standard errors clustered by SMOs in parentheses. Issue Change refers to *Substitution*, *Diversification*, *Excursion*, and *Exploration*, respectively. Differences in observations between the descriptive statistics and the Ordered Logit models are due to singletons and missing within-variation. By contrast, the OLS models keep singletons to estimate standard errors more accurately without affecting coefficients. [***] = $p < 0.001$; [**] = $p < 0.01$; [*] = $p < 0.05$.

Table B2. Two–Way Fixed Effects Regression Models on Coalition–Building

	Substitution		Diversification		Excursion		Exploration	
	Poisson	OLS	Poisson	OLS	Poisson	OLS	Poisson	OLS
Issue Change	0.161	0.010	0.361***	0.394*	0.307***	0.421**	0.380**	0.369
	(0.129)	(0.217)	(0.084)	(0.156)	(0.050)	(0.102)	(0.142)	(0.262)
Age (Ref. 0 – 2 Years)								
3 – 9 Years	0.081	0.188*	0.072	0.181*	0.075	0.177	0.085	0.185*
	(0.056)	(0.087)	(0.057)	(0.087)	(0.056)	(0.086)	(0.056)	(0.087)
10+ Years	0.218	0.380*	0.201	0.369	0.215	0.370*	0.219	0.374*
	(0.100)	(0.155)	(0.100)	(0.155)	(0.100)	(0.155)	(0.100)	(0.155)
Size	0.050***	0.428***	0.050***	0.427***	0.044***	0.418***	0.050***	0.428***
	(0.004)	(0.015)	(0.004)	(0.015)	(0.004)	(0.015)	(0.004)	(0.015)
Density	0.005**	0.008***	0.005**	0.008***	0.005***	0.008***	0.005***	0.008***
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Congressional Hearings	–0.001	–0.002*	–0.001	–0.002*	–0.001	–0.002*	–0.001	–0.002*
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
State of the Union	0.003*	0.007*	0.003*	0.007*	0.004*	0.007**	0.004*	0.007*
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Media	–0.001	–0.001*	–0.001	–0.001*	–0.001	–0.001*	–0.001	–0.001*
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Average Tactical Overlap	0.010	0.050	–0.007	0.041	0.013	0.046	0.010	0.047
	(0.074)	(0.118)	(0.074)	(0.118)	(0.074)	(0.118)	(0.074)	(0.118)
Disruptive Tactics	–0.533*	–0.426	–0.522*	–0.415	–0.524*	–0.407	–0.537*	–0.421
	(0.170)	(0.230)	(0.170)	(0.229)	(0.170)	(0.229)	(0.170)	(0.230)
N	3,601	7,138	3,601	7,138	3,601	7,138	3,601	7,138

Note: Poisson and OLS regressions with fixed effects for SMOs and years. Standard errors clustered by SMOs in parentheses. Issue Change refers to *Substitution*, *Diversification*, *Excursion*, and *Exploration*, respectively. Differences in observations between the descriptive statistics and the Poisson models are due to singletons and missing within-variation. By contrast, the OLS models keep singletons to estimate standard errors more accurately without affecting coefficients. *** = p < 0.001; ** = p < 0.01; * = p < 0.05.

Table B3. Two-Way Fixed Effects Regression Models on Organizational Failure

	Substitution	Diversification	Excursion	Exploration
Issue Change	–0.062	–0.080[**]	–0.094[***]	–0.015
	(0.053)	(0.038)	(0.025)	(0.064)
Age (Ref. 0 – 2 Years)				
3 – 9 Years	0.359[***]	0.360[***]	0.361[***]	0.358[***]
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)
10+ Years	0.408[***]	0.410[***]	0.410[***]	0.408[***]
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)
Size	0.001	0.001	0.003	0.001
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Density	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Congressional Hearings	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
State of the Union	–0.001	–0.001	–0.001	–0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Media	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Average Tactical Overlap	0.024	0.025	0.024	0.023
	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)
Disruptive Tactics	–0.089	–0.090	–0.092	–0.088
	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.056)
N	7,138	7,138	7,138	7,138

Note: OLS regressions with fixed effects for SMOs and years. Standard errors clustered by SMOs in parentheses. Issue Change refers to *Substitution*, *Diversification*, *Excursion*, and *Exploration*, respectively. [***] = $p < 0.001$; [**] = $p < 0.01$; [*] = $p < 0.05$.

Cohesion and Continuity in Social Movements: Issue-changing SMOs as Integrators, Preservers, and Generational Brokers

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Abstract: Social movement theory argues that social movement organizations contribute to cohesion and continuity in social movements. Empirically, however, social movement organizations have short lifespans. To resolve this contradiction, I argue that issue-changing social movement organizations are well-poised to contribute to social movements' cohesion and continuity as long-lived, skilled coalition-builders. To test these arguments, I use data from the Dynamics of Collective Action project to trace the cohesion and continuity of 15 social movements and issue changes of 4,442 social movement organizations in the United States between 1960 and 1995. Counterfactual network simulations show that issue-changing social movement organizations contribute to the cohesion of social movements as integrators of new social movement organizations. Regression analyses reveal they also contribute to the continuity of social movements as preservers of social movement culture and generational brokers between social movement organizations of different generations. These results demonstrate the importance of issue changes for the cohesion and continuity of social movements.

Introduction

Where do cohesion and continuity in social movements come from? What makes their actors well-connected and consistent in their actions across protest cycles (cf. McAdam 1988; Tarrow 1989; Tilly et al. 2020)? Social movement theory offers several answers to this question, such as the persistence of collective identities (Whittier 1997) and the political cultures of places (Nelson 2021). The most prominent argument, however, is that the cohesion and continuity of social movements hinges on social movement organizations (SMOs).[1] In this argument, SMOs constitute the backbone and collective memory of social movements, essential to establishing and maintaining their campaigns (Wang et al. 2018: 170; Tilly et al. 2020: 122; cf. Martin 2010; cf. Abbott 2016). They enable social movement actors to overcome coordination problems, fostering dialogue, leading to joint work, coalitions, and mergers (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Staggenborg 1998; Franzen 1993). SMOs also contribute to the continuity of social movements. They continuously mobilize resources and protestors and sustain commitment (McCarthy and Zald; Isserman 1987; Taylor 1989; Staggenborg 1998). Especially during abeyance periods, they sustain the legitimacy of social movement campaigns (Minkoff 1993; Edwards and Marullo 1995). Throughout protest cycles, SMOs preserve the culture of social movements, such as their collective identities, tactical repertoires, frames, and knowledge, and pass it on to the next generation of activists (Morris 1984; Gongaware 2010).

However, there is a problem bedeviling explanations of the cohesion and continuity of social movements that rely on SMOs and their actions. The vast majority of SMOs are too short-lived to fulfill these tasks. According to the Dynamics of Collective Action data set, individual SMOs in the US were protesting for less than two years on average between 1960 and 1995. This ephemerality presumably results from the fact that while SMOs are costly to maintain and

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[1] I define SMOs as formal organizations embedded in and working for the goals of social movements (McCarthy and Zald 1977), which are series of contentious displays of campaigns, repertoires, and WUNC displays of actors working towards social change (Tilly et al. 2020).

require intensive commitment by their members, they rarely have stable resource channels and cannot afford to employ staff. Instead, SMOs often have to rely on voluntary work and unstable resource channels, such as fundraising, which need constant renewal (Staggenborg 1998). Social movements, therefore, experience tremendous turnover not only in their population of activists but also in their population of SMOs. If so, how can SMOs contribute to the cohesion and continuity of social movements when they often cannot even sustain themselves?

To answer this question, I propose that SMOs need to be skilled coalition-builders and long-lived to fulfill these tasks, and that issue-changing SMOs, i.e., those changing what issues they protest for, are most likely to fulfill these premises. In particular, I argue that issue-changing SMOs contribute to the cohesion and continuity of social movements via three mechanisms, namely as *integrators*, *preservers*, and *generational brokers*. As *integrators*, issue-changing SMOs contribute to the cohesion of social movements by occupying positions in the center of social movements into which they integrate newcomer SMOs, i.e., that only recently started to protest for a given social movement, via forming relationships with them. As *preservers*, issue-changing SMOs contribute to the continuity of social movements by preserving social movement culture, such as collective identities, tactical repertoires, frames, and knowledge. Finally, as *generational brokers*, issue-changing SMOs contribute to the continuity of social movements by forming relationships with SMOs from different generations, i.e., with non-overlapping lifespans. In this way, they constitute indirect channels that enable the preservation and passing on of distinct knowledge, i.e., specific information about local targets and policymakers, between generations of SMOs.

To test these arguments, I use the Dynamics of Collective Action (DoCA) data set to investigate the relationship between the cohesion and continuity of 15 social movements and the issue changes of 4,442 SMOs in the US between 1960 and 1995. To assess whether issue-changing SMOs affect the cohesion of social movements, I use counterfactual network simulations. That is, I construct coalition networks for each social movement and use three

cohesion indicators to measure how the removal of issue-changing SMOs affects the cohesion of these networks. To test the significance of the observed loss of cohesion, I randomly remove SMOs several times to create confidence intervals for each cohesion indicator in each coalition network. As expected, the network simulation results reveal that issue-changing SMOs make significant and considerably large contributions to the cohesion of social movements. Additional descriptive analyses also indicate that these contributions result from issue-changing SMOs acting as *integrators*, as they tend to occupy positions in the center of social movements into which they integrate newcomer SMOs. To assess whether issue-changing SMOs affect the continuity of SMOs, I rely on regression analysis. Testing their ability to act as *preservers*, I use linear fixed effect regressions to investigate how issue-changing SMOs affect the tactical preservation of social movements, i.e., the re-use of protest tactics from past periods. In line with expectations, these linear regressions certify an increase of 1–2% in the degree of tactical preservation per issue-changing SMO in a social movement. However, they also show that the relevance of these continuity contributions depends on the high levels of SMO turnover that social movements experience. Finally, I use negative binomial fixed effects regression to assess whether issue-changing SMOs can act as *generational brokers*. In particular, I investigate whether conducting issue changes increases the opportunities for SMOs to engage in *generational brokerage,* measured by their numbers of partners from different generations. As expected, these negative binomial regressions show that conducting issue changes increases the *generational brokerage* opportunities for SMOs many times over. Furthermore, they reveal that this enhanced ability of issue-changing SMOs to act as *generational brokers* results from them being long-lived and skilled coalition-builders.

Hence, I make several contributions in this article to the social movement literature. First, I improve social movement theories of SMOs as contributors to cohesion and continuity in social movements by identifying overlooked premises. In particular, I emphasize the contradiction between assuming SMOs provide cohesion and continuity while they are often

short-lived, showing that longevity and coalition-building are necessary but rarely met premises. Second, I empirically demonstrate that issue-changing SMOs fulfill these premises, enabling them to contribute to the cohesion and continuity of social movements as *integrators*, *preservers*, and *generational brokers*. Third, I demonstrate that issue changes of SMOs are not only vital for SMOs themselves (Kappes Manuscript I; Kappes Manuscript II), but also for their social movements, challenging past social movement research that either ignored or framed them negatively as signs of co-optation, loss of disruptiveness, and the prioritizing of survival over social movement causes (Michels 1962[1911]; Zald and Ash 1966; Piven and Cloward 1977; Meyer and Tarrow 1998; Tilly et al. 2020). Ironically, my findings indicate that SMOs at the risk of being labeled as traitors for changing their issues are key to social movement success by providing cohesion and continuity that convinces policymakers and other gatekeepers of change.

In the remainder of this article, I provide evidence for the contradiction between social movement theories claiming that SMOs contribute to the cohesion and continuity of social movements and their ephemerality. In the next step, I lay out theoretical arguments supported by empirical evidence about why issue change is likely to provide a solution to this problem, enabling SMOs to contribute to the cohesion and continuity of social movements by acting as *integrators*, *preservers*, and *generational brokers*. Then, I introduce the Dynamics of Collective Action data set and discuss my analysis strategy, methods, and operationalization of variables. Afterward, I present results from counterfactual network simulation and regression analyses showing how issue-changing SMOs affect the cohesion and continuity of social movements. Lastly, I end with a discussion of my findings and their implications, alongside limitations and possibilities for future research.

Theory

Ephemerality and Turnover of SMOs

Social movement theory argues that SMOs are vital for the cohesion and continuity social movements need for success. SMOs are assumed to contribute to the cohesion of social movements by enabling social movement actors to overcome coordination problems. Thus, they are assumed to foster and sustain dialogue between social movement actors, joint work, coalitions, and mergers (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Staggenborg 1998; Franzen 1993). Likewise, SMOs are assumed to contribute to the continuity of social movements by continuously mobilizing resources and protestors, especially in abeyance periods and hostile environments (McCarthy and Zald; Isserman 1987; Taylor 1989; Staggenborg 1998). In these circumstances, they are also assumed to grant legitimacy to social movement campaigns, securing their sustainment (Minkoff 1993; Edwards and Marullo 1995). Across protest cycles, SMOs are assumed to preserve the culture of social movements, such as their collective identities, tactical repertoires, frames, and knowledge, and transmit them to the next generation of activists (Morris 1984; Gongaware 2010).

These assumptions rest on the premise that SMOs have extensive lifespans, which is reasonable as durability is an almost taken-for-granted characteristic of organizations (Scott and Davis 2015: 11). However, in the case of SMOs, this taken-for-grantedness is misleading as most SMOs are, in fact, very ephemeral. Looking at the SMOs that protested in the United States between 1960 and 1995 reveals that most did not exist for even a single year (see left panel of figure 1). Also, on average, individual SMOs protested for less than two years. For most of these SMOs, it was, therefore, impossible to contribute to social movements' cohesion and continuity. Moreover, even if SMOs existed sufficiently long to be able to make such contributions, in principle, the task of building the necessary social relationships was likely to be very challenging.
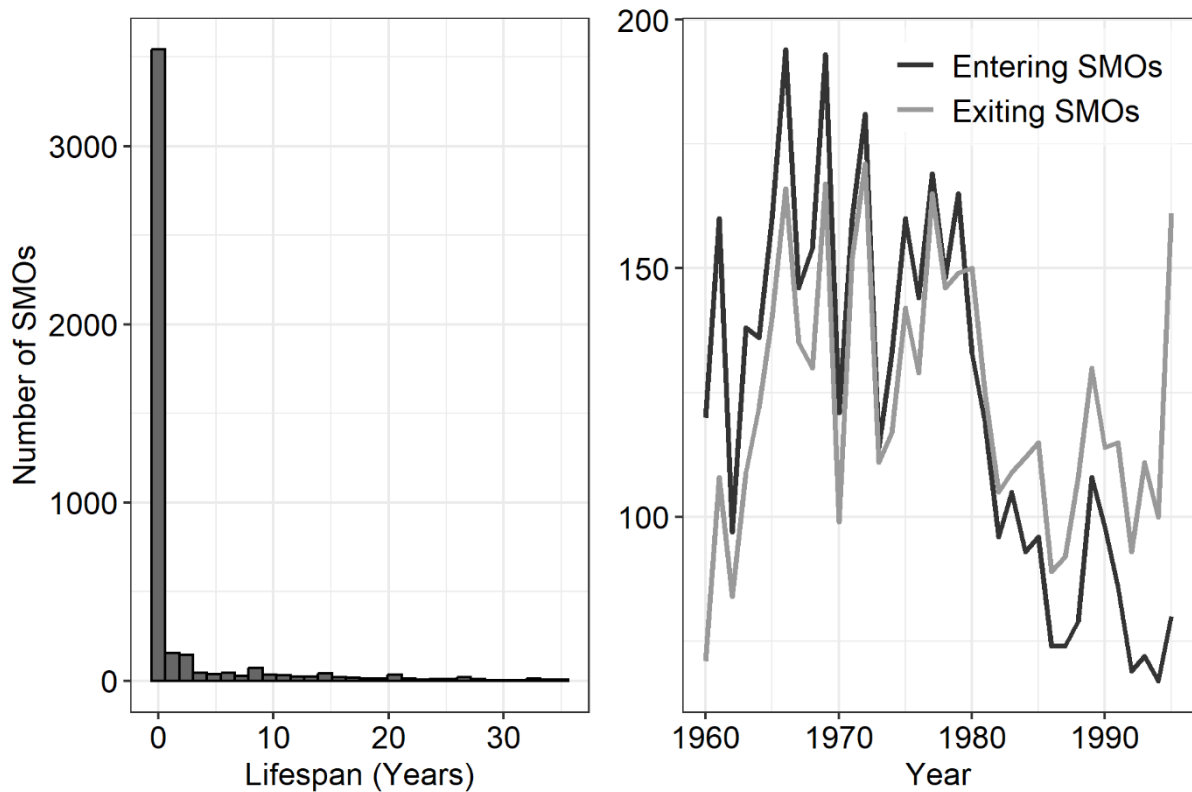
FIG. 1. – Lifespan Distribution and Yearly Turnover of SMOs, 1960 – 1995
Note: The left panel shows the lifespan distribution of SMOs. The right panel shows the number of entering and exiting SMOs, i.e. SMOs that start and cease to protest respectively, for each year between 1960 and 1995.
Source: Dynamics of Collective Action data set.

The reason for this complication was the high levels of turnover of SMOs that their ephemerality produced. The right panel of figure 1 shows that each year until the end of the 1970s, around as many SMOs exited the social movement field, i.e., ceased to protest, as new SMOs entered, i.e., started to protest. Starting from the 1980s, accompanied by a general decline in social movement activity, the number of exiting SMOs began to exceed the number of entering SMOs. Their regular replacement, therefore, poses an additional obstacle for SMOs to contribute to the cohesion and continuity of social movements, leading to a second premise beyond longevity: SMOs must be skilled coalition-builders able to forge relationships with ever-changing partners.

Given these two premises, the question is, what makes SMOs long-lived and skilled coalition builders and enables them to contribute to the cohesion and continuity of social movements? My argument that I will lay out in the rest of this section is that a small minority

of issue-changing SMOs, i.e., SMOs that change their goals, are likely to fulfill both premises and can play the role that social movement theory has assigned to SMOs.

Issue Change: Longevity and Skilled Coalition-Building

Issue changes take place if SMOs decide to change their goals, e.g., from an Environmental to a Women's Rights issue. Although the beginnings of research into organizational change in SMOs date back half a century ago (Zald and Ash 1966), social movement research has largely neglected the topic of issue change in favor of tactical change and (de)radicalization (e.g., Messinger 1954; McAdam 1983; Wang and Soule 2012; Wang and Soule 2016). Only recently have the antecedents and consequences of SMOs changing their issues begun to incite the interest of social movement scholars (see Larson 2009; Wang et al. 2019; Ring-Ramirez and Earl 2021, Kappes Manuscript I; Kappes Manuscript II).

Building on these first investigations, I argue that changing issues enables SMOs to contribute to the cohesion and continuity of social movements by making them long-lived and skilled coalition-builders. Conducting issue changes has been shown to improve the longevity of SMOs (Kappes Manuscript II). On average, SMOs that changed their issues in the Dynamics of Collective Action data set protested for ten years, while their non-issue-changing counterparts only did so for less than a year. Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between issue change and the lifespans of SMOs by comparing the lifespan distributions for SMOs that changed their issues to those that did not. These life-prolonging effects of issue change occur as they allow SMOs to adapt to everchanging environments (Kappes Manuscript II).
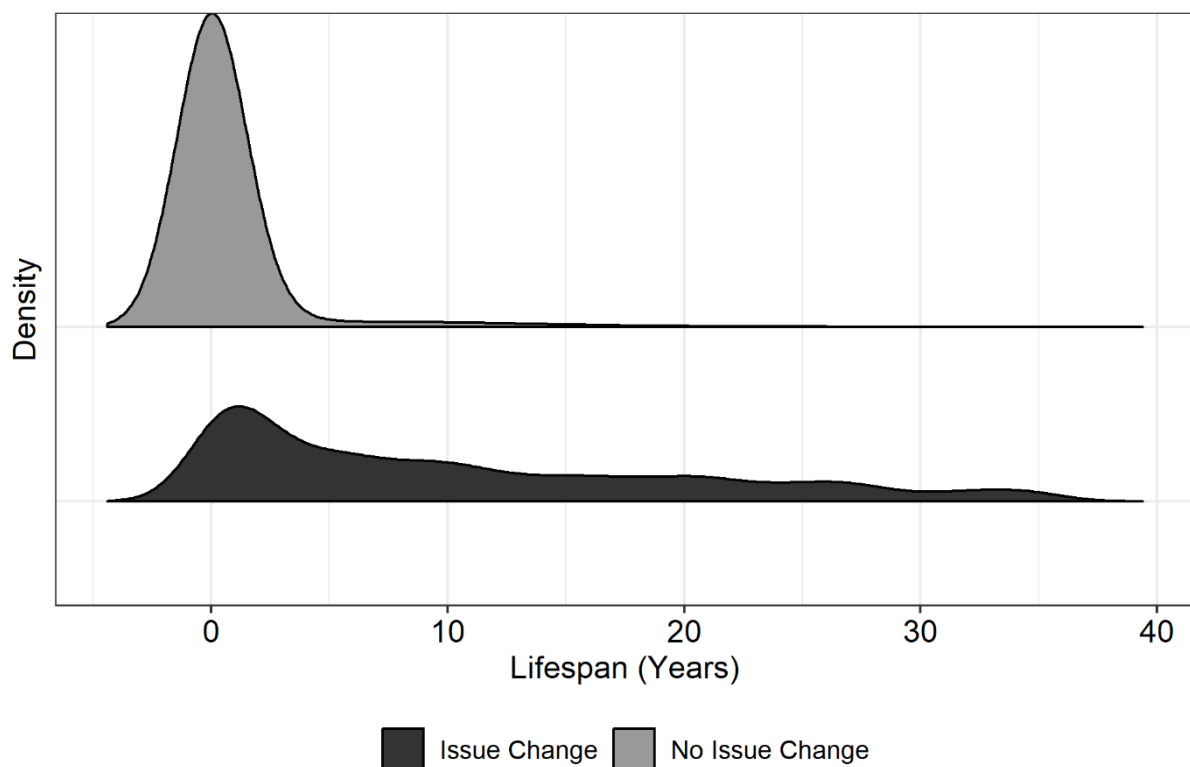
FIG. 2. – Relationship between Issue Change and Lifespan.

Furthermore, conducting issue changes improves SMOs' ability to find coalition partners (Kappes Manuscript II). Among the SMOs in the Dynamics of Collective Action data set, those that changed their issues had around six coalition partners on average throughout their lifespan, while those that did not had less than one. The reasons for this effect are twofold. First, issue changes are likely to (at least temporarily) produce 'hybrid identities,' i.e., the circumstance that SMO protests for multiple issues simultaneously (Heaney and Rojas 2014). Protesting for multiple issues has been demonstrated to improve coalition building for SMOs (Van Dyke 2003; Borland 2008), as they benefit from a greater pool of potential partners and greater flexibility (Lichterman 1995). Second, issue change enables SMOs to adapt other SMOs' programs, which makes the program alignment necessary for coalition-building more likely (Kappes Manuscript II).

Therefore, I argue that issue-changing SMOs will likely fulfill both longevity and skilled coalition-building premises. Of course, fulfilling these premises does not ensure whether

or not SMOs contribute to the cohesion and continuity of social movements. In the following sections, I propose mechanisms by which issue-changing SMOs use their longevity and ability in coalition-building to contribute to the cohesion and continuity of social movements.

Cohesion: Issue-Changing SMOs as Integrators

How do issue-changing SMOs contribute to the cohesion of social movements? To answer this question, I argue that issue-changing SMOs can act as *integrators*. That is, their longevity and coalition-building skills enable issue-changing SMOs to hold positions at the center of social movements into which they integrate newcomer SMOs by forming relationships with them. Moreover, this mechanism consists of two steps and rests on the interplay between the activities of issue-changing SMOs and the high turnover rate in the population of SMOs.

The first step of the mechanism considers how the activities of issue-changing SMOs are likely to place them at the center of social movements. In particular, I argue that issue-changing SMOs hold such central positions, as they, in contrast to a vast majority of SMOs, are long-lived and well-poised to build the necessary relationships to connect to their social movements' centers. That is, while other SMOs quickly vanish, issue-changing SMOs persist and build relationships that deeply integrate them into their social movements.

The second step of the mechanism considers how issue-changing SMOs positioned at their social movements' center integrate newcomer SMOs. In particular, I argue that issue-changing SMOs continue to look for coalition partners when holding central positions in their social movements. However, due to the high turnover rate in the SMO population, the coalition partners they find are largely newcomer SMOs. By crafting relationships with these newcomer SMOs, issue-changing SMOs integrate them into their social movements' center. Thereby, issue-changing SMOs contribute to the cohesion of social movements by crafting direct relationships with newcomer SMOs and indirectly connecting them to all other SMOs in the

center of the social movement. This integration into the center of social movements is likely to make the contributions of issue-changing acting as *integrators* to cohesion very impactful. While other SMOs might also craft relationships with newcomer SMOs, their contribution to social movements' cohesion is likely weaker as they are less likely to integrate newcomer SMOs into the center of social movements.

In summary, I argue that issue-changing SMOs contribute to the cohesion of social movements by selecting themselves into the center of social movements and into which they integrate newcomer SMOs over time. Therefore, I have two empirical expectations. First, I expect that issue-changing SMOs positively affect the cohesion of social movements. Second, I expect that issue-changing SMOs are more likely to hold positions at the center rather than the periphery of social movements.

Continuity: Issue-Changing SMOs As Preservers & Generational Brokers

I also argue that issue-changing SMOs contribute to the continuity of social movements by acting as *preservers* and *generational brokers*. First, due to their longevity, issue-changing SMOs act as *preservers* by maintaining the culture of social movements, such as collective identities, tactical repertoires, frames, and knowledge, as intended by social movement theory (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Morris 1984; Gongaware 2010). Other SMOs mostly vanish and get replaced too quickly. At the same time, however, the high turnover rate among SMOs makes the contributions of issue-changing SMOs to social movements' continuity necessary and all the more vital, as their minority carries a major part of the task.

Second, issue-changing SMOs can act as *generational brokers* between SMOs from different generations, which could not form relationships. This mechanism also jointly depends on the activities of issue-changing SMOs and the high turnover of SMOs. The problem with high SMO turnover is not only that most SMOs cannot preserve and pass on general social

movement culture but also that they cannot pass on their local knowledge, e.g., information about local targets or policymakers, which can be valuable for social movement actors of later generations (Casas-Cortés et al. 2008; Della Porta and Pavan 2017; Nardini et al. 2020). Such transfers are, therefore, crucial for the continuity of social movement as local knowledge would otherwise get lost quickly due to the short lifespans of SMOs. Social relationships among SMOs are the likely vehicle for these transfers, as previous research has established that culture diffuses via social relationships in social movements (Strang and Soule 1998; Wang and Soule 2012). However, the high turnover rate among SMOs implies that most SMOs cannot craft such relationships with each other.

To illustrate this problem, the left panel of figure 3 shows two SMOs *A* and *B* that were briefly active in the 1960s and 1980s, respectively, i.e., from different generations. In the 1960s, SMO *A* produced pieces of local knowledge (square boxes) that would be useful for SMO *B* and get lost if not passed on. SMO *A*, however, cannot directly transfer its local knowledge to SMO *B* as they are from different generations. Likewise, SMO *A* transferring its local knowledge to most other SMOs of its generation is also unlikely to solve the problem as they likewise soon disappear.

The idea of *generational brokerage* is that SMOs that are active across generations can form relationships with SMOs from different generations, constituting indirect channels between them. In this way, such SMOs can contribute to the continuity of social movements by preserving and passing on local knowledge in social movements. As issue-changing SMOs are likely to be long-lived and skilled coalition-builders, I argue that they are especially poised to engage in *generational brokerage*. The right panel of figure 3 illustrates the *generational brokerage* mechanism by introducing an issue-changing SMO *C* that brokers between SMO *A* and SMO *B* in two steps. First, the issue-changing SMO *C* adopts and preserves SMO *A's* local knowledge in the 1960s and, second, passes it on to SMO *B* in the 1980s.

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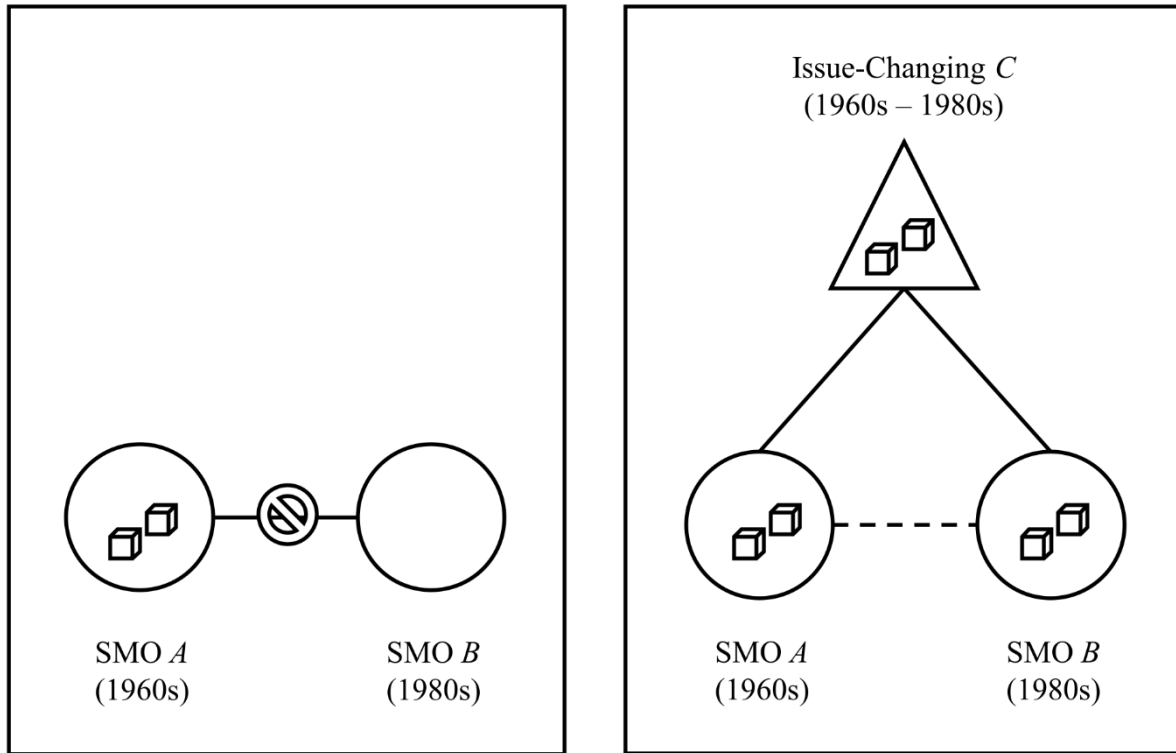
FIG. 3. – Illustration of Generational Brokerage.

Hence, I argue that issue-changing SMOs contribute to the continuity of social movements by acting as *preservers* and *generational brokers*. In particular, I have three empirical expectations. First, I expect that issue-changing SMOs contribute positively to the continuity of social movements. Second, I expect that the positive effect of issue-changing SMOs on continuity will depend on the turnover rate of the SMO population of social movements. Finally, I expect that issue-changing SMOs are more likely to have opportunities to engage in *generational brokerage*.

Dynamics of Collective Action, 1960 – 1995

To answer my research questions, I use the Dynamics of Collective Action (DoCA), an established data set in social movement research. The DoCA data set covers over 23,000 protest events in the United States, as reported in the New York Times between 1960 and 1995. Notably,

the data set contains information on 15 social movements allowing me to trace their cohesion and continuity over time: 'Anti-Nuclear (ANU),' 'Anti-Free Trade (AFT),' 'Women's Rights (FEM),' 'Peace (PEA),' 'Environmental (ENV),' 'African American Civil Rights (AFC),' 'Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights (LGB),' 'Hispanic Civil Rights (HIC),' 'Native American Civil Rights (NAC),' 'Asian American Civil Rights (ASC),' 'Disabled Civil Rights (DIC),' 'Anti-Ethnic/Immigrant (AIE),' 'Pro-Democracy/Human Rights (DHR),' 'Social Welfare (SOW),' and 'Affordable Housing/Homelessness (HOU).'[2] The data set further lists the names of up to four participating SMOs and the raised issues for close to 10,000 protest events. In total, the DoCA includes 4,442 SMOs whose issues I can trace from one protest event to the next, allowing me to trace their issue changes.[3]

The DoCA, like any newspaper data set, comes with selection and description bias problems that threaten the validity of my results (Earl et al. 2004; Davenport 2009; Andrews and Caren 2010). Comparing newspaper coverage of protest events to a representative sample of protest events, Beyerlein et al. (2018) document that although newspapers accurately describe protest events, they are more likely to cover those larger in size, taking place in capitals, and on salient issues. I, therefore, likely overestimate the cohesion and continuity of social movements as the SMOs at these reported protest events are presumably better connected than those at smaller protest events, in rural areas, and on less salient issues. Also, I likely miss the issue changes of SMOs in smaller and less prominent social movements. These biases, however, do not affect my ability to investigate the impact of issue-changing SMOs on social movements' cohesion and continuity.

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[2] These issues are not provided by the DoCA data set but by Wang et al. (2019, p. 428), who induced them by applying a community-detection algorithm on a co-occurrence network of claims, where two particular claims had a tie if they have been jointly protested for at a protest event at least once.

[3] Note that I use an updated list of the SMOs in DoCA provided by Jennifer Earl as the data set in its original form contains some SMOs multiple times due to typos and changing names available at https://sites.udel.edu/jearl/data-resources.

Analytical Strategy: Operationalization and Methods

To closely align my empirical analysis and theoretical arguments, I apply two separate analytical strategies to investigate how issue-changing SMOs affect social movements' cohesion and continuity. That is, I analyze the impact of issue-changing SMOs on social movements' cohesion separately for each social movement for the whole available time span from 1960 to 1995. I choose this 'per-social-movement-across-periods' strategy as my theoretical arguments imply that the positive impact of issue-changing SMOs on their social movements' cohesion unfolds only over time. In contrast, I analyze how issue-changing SMOs affect their social movements' continuity separately for each social movement and three-year periods starting from 1963 to 1995.[4] Here, I choose this 'per-social-movement-per-period' strategy as my theoretical arguments imply that the positive impact of issue-changing SMOs on their social movements' continuity unfolds at once and continuously.

Dependent Variables

Cohesion

To measure cohesion, I construct coalition networks for the 15 social movements between 1960 and 1995. In these coalition networks, nodes are SMOs that at least protested once for a claim of the respective social movement, and ties between pairs of SMOs exist if they at least once jointly protested for a claim of the respective social movement.[5] For example, as both *Women Strike for Peace* and the *National Organization for Women* protested for 'Peace' and 'Women's Right,' they are nodes in the coalition networks of both these respective social movements.

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[4] I use three-year periods as this reflects the average length of protest cycles in the DoCA data (cf. Wang and Soule 2016).

[5] Note that although SMOs can be nodes in multiple social movement coalition networks, the node overlap between these coalition networks is low, with an average Jaccard coefficient of 0.04. Only considering issue-changing SMOs, the average Jaccard coefficient is slightly higher at 0.14.

However, they protested jointly for 'Women's Rights' but not 'Peace,' thus a tie between them exists only in the former but not in the latter coalition network.

To assess the cohesion of the 15 coalition networks, I use three network characteristics (cf. Hillmann 2021). First, I use the *share of unreachable pairs* to quantify the percentage of pairs of SMOs unable to reach each other via existing ties. As a measure of cohesion, the *share of unreachable pairs* quantifies the extent to which information can travel and SMOs reach each other. Second, I use the *number of components* with a minimum size of two SMOs to assess the overall fragmentation of the coalition network. Lastly, I consider the *share of nodes in the main component* of the coalition networks, which contains the largest number of SMOs, to assess whether social movements have cohesive centers.

Continuity

To operationalize continuity, I calculate the degree of *tactical preservation*, i.e., the percentage of protest tactics that a social movement in a given period reuses from the previous period. I choose the use of protest tactics to measure social movements' continuity, as they reflect the culture of social movements (Wang and Soule 2012; Jung et al. 2014; Wang et al. 2019; Ring-Ramirez and Earl 2021). For example, the Peace movement had used 27 protest tactics in the period between 1960 and 1962 and reused 19 of these 27 tactics between 1963 and 1965. Thus, the Peace movement's tactical preservation for this period is 0.703.[6] As I lack data on the period previous to 1960, I calculate the degree of tactical preservation for each social movement for each three-year period starting from 1963 to 1995.

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[6] I chose not to use more elaborate measures of categorical similarity, i.e., Jaccard or Dice similarity, as these would be affected by social movements introducing new protest tactics.

Generational Brokerage

To assess the opportunities for SMOs to engage in *generational brokerage*, I count the number of pairs among their coalition partners with non-overlapping lifespans, i.e., from different generations, in a given coalition network. I do so because each of these pairs constitutes an opportunity to engage in *generational brokerage*, as their constituting SMOs themselves cannot build a relationship. For instance, *Peace Action* had 26 partners in the Peace movement, resulting in 325 partner-partner pairs. Of these, 68 partner-partner pairs involved SMOs with non-overlapping lifespans. Thus, the *generational brokerage* value for *Peace Action* is 68.

Independent Variables

Issue-changing SMOs

As issue-changing SMOs, I define SMOs that have at least once conducted an issue change, which takes place if an SMO protests for any issue for the first time. To identify issue changes, I compare the issues an SMO protests for at any of its protest events with its issue portfolios from all its previous protest events. Thereby, I distinguish between four types of issue change, namely, *substitutions*, *diversifications*, *excursions*, and *explorations*. A *substitution* takes place if an SMO entirely replaces its previous issues with new issues, while a *diversification* takes place if new issues are added to the previous issues. An *excursion* takes place if an SMO adopts a new issue but only for a brief period of time before returning to its previous issues. Lastly, an *exploration* takes place if an SMO drops both its new and previous issues and starts to pursue entirely different issues (see Appendix A for further details or Kappes Manuscript I).

In the following analyses, however, I exclusively focus on *diversifications* and *excursions*. By definition, issue-changing SMOs that conduct *substitutions* or *explorations* leave their social movements to enter new ones and, therefore, cannot contribute to the cohesion

and continuity of the social movements they were part of when deciding to change issues. For example, suppose an Environmental SMO entirely stops to protest for Environmental issues as it substituted to Women's Rights. In that case, it can no longer contribute to the Environmental movements' cohesion and continuity. In contrast, issue-changing SMOs conducting *diversifications* and *excursions* remain in their social movements and can contribute to cohesion and continuity.

I then use the information about SMOs' conducted *diversifications* and *excursions* to construct my independent variables, which differ between the cohesion and continuity analyses. For the cohesion analysis, I construct *diversification* and *excursion* dummies, which take on the value of 1 if an SMO conducted at least one *diversification* or *excursion*, respectively, and 0 otherwise.[7] For the continuity analysis, I calculate the number of established SMOs that have conducted *diversifications* or *excursions*, respectively, for each social movement and three-year period. To fall into this category, SMOs need to satisfy two conditions. First, they must have conducted a *diversification* or *excursion*, respectively, in any previous three-year period of the respective social movement. Second, they must be active, i.e., protest at least once, in the respective social movement and the given three-year period.

Consider, for illustration, that in the first period observed between 1960 and 1962, the *War Resisters League*, *Peace Action*, and *Women Strike for Peace* conducted *excursions* in the Anti-Nuclear Movement. As these SMOs were also active between 1963 and 1965, the Anti-Nuclear movement's number of established SMOs that conducted *excursions* is three for the second period. The *War Resisters League* and *Women Strike for Peace* also conducted *diversifications* in addition to the *Young Americans for Freedom*. Hence, there were also three established SMOs that conducted *diversifications* in the Anti-Nuclear movement in the second period.

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[7] I also use these *diversification* and *excursion* dummies in the generational brokerage analysis.

Network Simulations

To assess the contribution of issue-changing SMOs to the cohesion of social movements, I apply counterfactual network simulations separately for *diversifications* and *excursions* consisting of three steps (cf. Hillmann 2021). In the first step, I simulate counterfactual coalition networks for each of the 15 social movements in which issue-changing SMOs are not present by removing all SMOs that conducted *diversifications* or *excursions*, respectively. In the Peace movement, for example, where 60 SMOs conducted *diversifications*, I remove these 60 SMOs from the original Peace movement coalition network to construct the Peace movement's counterfactual network. In the second step, I compare the three cohesion indicators, i.e., the *share of unreachable pairs*, the *number of components*, and the *size of the main component*, between the original and counterfactual coalition networks to quantify the contribution of issue-changing SMOs to their social movements' cohesion. In the last step, I test whether the differences in cohesion between the original and counterfactual coalition networks are systematic or simply the product of chance. I do so because removing nodes from the coalition networks will impact the cohesion indicators regardless of whether they represent issue-changing- or any other SMOs. Therefore, I construct control coalition networks by removing the same number of randomly chosen SMOs from the original coalition networks as I remove issue-changing SMOs in the counterfactual networks. For example, in the case of the Peace movement with 60 SMOs that conducted *diversifications*, I remove 60 randomly chosen SMOs. For each social movement, I simulate 1,000 control coalition networks and use the resulting distributions of cohesion indicators to construct 95% confidence intervals using the values at the 2.5 percentile as the lower- and at the 97.5 percentile as the upper bound. If these confidence intervals overlap with the respective cohesion indicators from the counterfactual coalition networks, the impact of the issue-changing SMOs on these cohesion indicators is not different, smaller, or greater than that from other SMOs. Table A2 in the appendix provides an overview

of the size, the number of issue-changing SMOs (which I remove in the counterfactual network simulations), and the cohesion indicator values in the original networks for each social movement.

Regression Analysis

To investigate how issue-changing SMOs affect the continuity of social movements, I use linear regression models to regress the degree of tactical preservation on the number of established SMOs that have conducted either *diversifications* or *excursions*. Furthermore, I control for potential confounders and moderators. First, I include an interaction term between my independent variables and the *share of newcomer SMOs*, measured as the proportion of SMOs protesting for a particular social movement for the first time in a given three-year period. The reason for this is that the ability of issue-changing SMOs to contribute to the continuity of social movements depends on the turnover in the SMO population. Second, I control the number of protest events in each social movement in each three-year period, as *protest activity* could positively impact both the number of issue-changing SMOs and the degree of tactical preservation. Finally, I use fixed effects for each social movement and each three-year period to control for unobserved heterogeneity between social movements and period effects.

As my dependent variable in the generational brokerage analysis is a count variable with strong overdispersion and zero-inflation, I use negative binomial regression to investigate whether issue-changing SMOs have more opportunities to engage in *generational brokerage* (Allison and Waterman 2002).[8] Furthermore, I control for the *lifespan* and *partners* of SMOs as potential mediators, which I measure as the difference in years between their first and last

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[8] The strong overdispersion and zero inflation result from the short lifespans of most SMOs. In particular, my generational brokerage measure is inflated by *structural zeros* as most SMOs did not survive sufficiently long to engage in *generational brokerage*. Because of this, I also conducted the analysis using zero-inflation and hurdle models designed to tackle these problems. I decided to report the negative binomial regressions as they make fewer assumptions about the data, yield the same results, and handle overdispersion and zero inflation at least equally well.

protest event and as the total number of coalition partners they had during their lifespan, respectively.[9] Finally, I use fixed effects for social movements and starting years, i.e., the years of SMOs first protest events, to account for unobserved heterogeneity between social movements and period effects. Table A3 in the appendix reports descriptive statistics for all relevant variables in the continuity- and generational brokerage analysis.

Results

Issue-Changing SMOs and Cohesion

Do issue-changing SMOs contribute to the cohesion of social movements? To answer this question, figure 4 illustrates how removing issue-changing SMOs in each social movement affects three cohesion indicators in counterfactual network simulations. For these cohesion indicators, dotted lines show their value in the original networks, dots their value in the counterfactual networks, i.e., after removing the issue-changing SMOs, and whiskers 95-% confidence intervals. If cohesion is significantly lower in the counterfactual than in the original networks, issue-changing SMOs make vital contributions to the cohesion of social movements. Such a decrease in cohesion is indicated by a higher share of unreachable pairs, a larger number of components, and a lower main component size in the counterfactual- than in the original network.

Indeed, my expectation that issue-changing SMOs contribute to the cohesion of social movements holds true for almost every social movement.[10] Whether issue-changing SMOs have conducted *diversifications* or *excursions,* removing them from the original networks shows a

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[9] Note that the lifespan measure is only a proxy due to the truncated nature of the DoCA data. In particular, lifespans will be too low for SMOs that existed before 1960. This bias, however, should not affect my results as the average lifespan of SMOs in the DoCA data is two years.

[10] Note that the removal of complete components in the periphery in a very few cases leads to a counterintuitive increase in the cohesion parameters.

decrease in cohesion across all indicators beyond chance, i.e., outside the bounds of the 95-% confidence intervals.[11] Furthermore, the counterfactual network simulations allow me to quantify the impact of issue-changing SMOs on their social movements cohesion by comparing the cohesion indicators between the original- and counterfactual networks. On average, removing issue-changing SMOs that have conducted *diversifications* increases the share of unreachable pairs by 11.72 percentage points, the number of components by 37.17%, and decreases the size of the main component by 56.69% (see table B1 in the appendix).[12] The impact of issue-changing SMOs that have conducted *excursions* is even larger with an average increase of 15.27 percentage points and 54.63% in the share of unreachable pairs and number of components, respectively, and an average decrease of 81.56% in main component size. Together, these results show that issue-changing SMOs make significant and considerably large contributions to the cohesion of social movements.

But why can issue-changing SMOs improve the cohesion of social movements? I argued that issue-changing SMOs are likely to hold positions in the center of social movements, i.e., the main component, into which they can integrate newcomer SMOs. This integration of newcomer SMOs into the center of social movements, in turn, especially improves cohesion as they get indirectly connected to all other SMOs in the center of their social movement. To test the plausibility of this mechanism, I descriptively assess whether issue-changing SMOs are more likely than non-issue-changing SMOs to hold positions in the center of their social movements.

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[11] The only three exceptions are the three smallest social movements, the 'Asian American Civil Rights Movement,' the 'Anti-Free Trade Movement,' and the 'Disabled Civil Rights Movement' which consist of 58, 36, and 21 SMOs, respectively. Presumably, these three social movements are simply too small to be cohesive and for issue-changing SMO to impact their cohesion. For instance, Table A2 in the appendix shows that the number of components in their original networks is already very low, i.e., 8, 3, and 4. Likewise, the main component sizes for these social movements are 8, 19, and 5. This pattern indicates social movements need to be of a certain size for issue-changing SMOs to contribute to their cohesion.

[12] Table B2 in the appendix also reports the changes in cohesion indicators between the original- and counterfactual network separately for each social movement.

FIG. 4. – Counterfactual Network Simulation Results

Note: This figure displays the impact of removing issue-changing SMOs (DIV = *Diversification*; EXC = *Excursion*) on three cohesion indicators, i.e., the share of unreachable pairs, the number of components, and the size of the main component. Dashed lines indicate the cohesion indicator values in the original networks, dots represent the cohesion indicator values in the counterfactual networks, and whiskers represent 95% - confidence intervals constructed from 1,000 control networks.
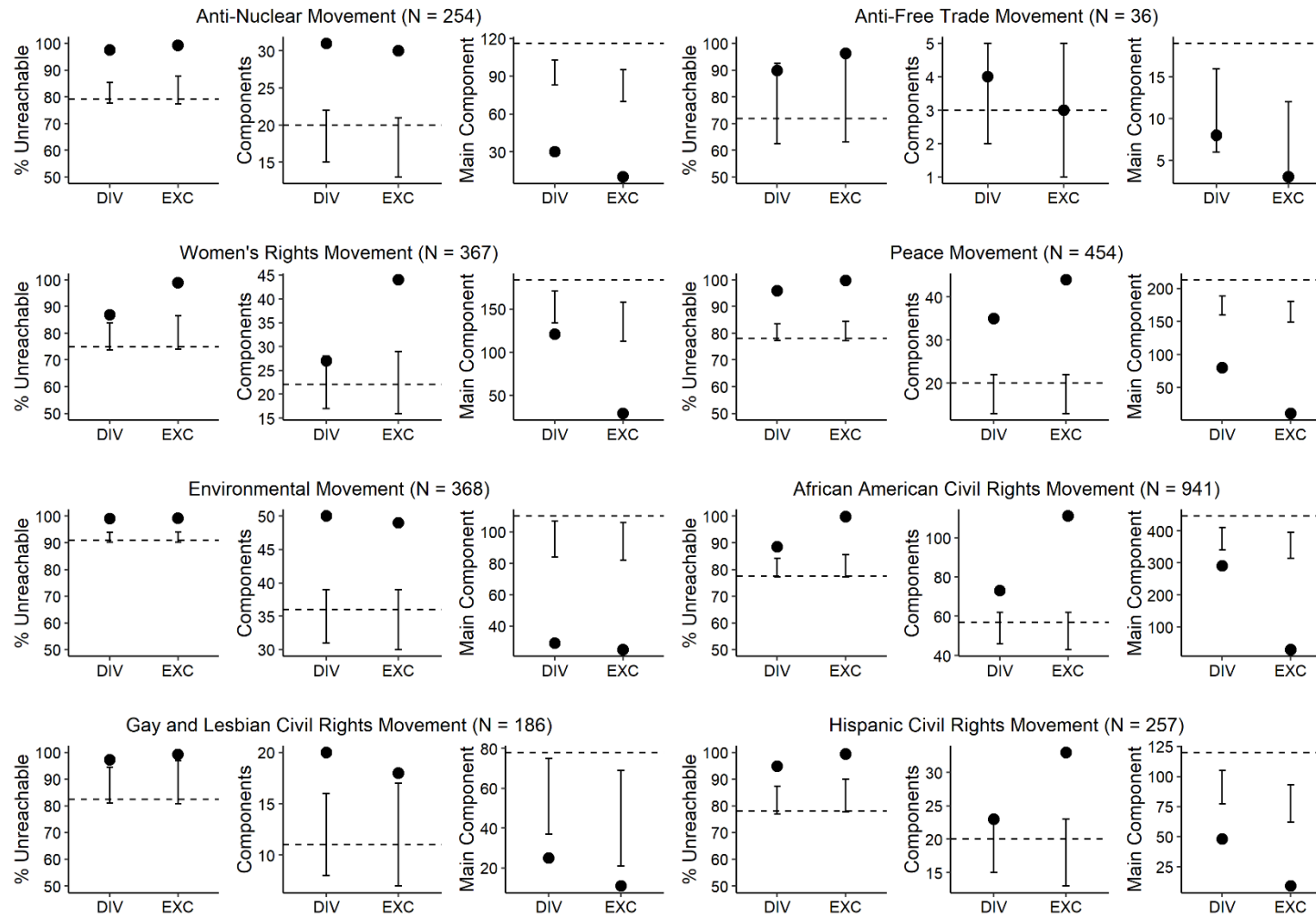
FIG. 4 continued. – Counterfactual Network Simulation Results

Note: This figure displays the impact of removing issue-changing SMOs (DIV = *Diversification*; EXC = *Excursion*) on three cohesion indicators, i.e., the share of unreachable pairs, the number of components, and the size of the main component. Dashed lines indicate the cohesion indicator values in the original networks, dots represent the cohesion indicator values in the counterfactual networks, and whiskers represent 95% - confidence intervals constructed from 1,000 control networks.
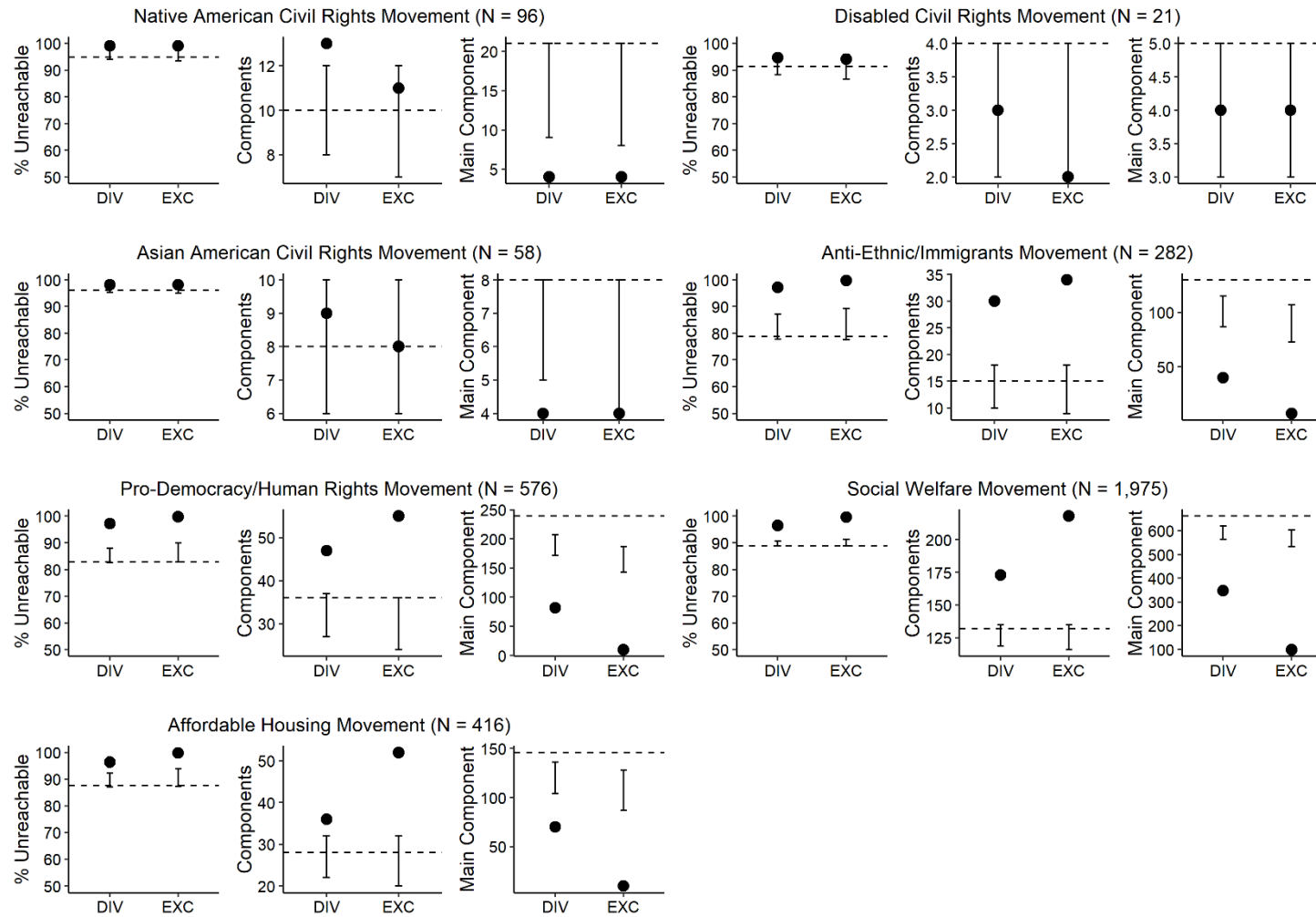
170

Table 1, therefore, reports the odds ratios of issue-changing SMOs to be in the center of their social movements compared to non-issue-changing SMOs. On average, issue-changing SMOs that have conducted *diversifications* are 3.13- and those that have conducted *excursions* are 2.96 times more likely than non-issue-changing SMOs to occupy positions in the center of social movements.

Table 1. Odds Ratios of Issue-Changing SMOs to hold Positions in Social Movement Centers

	Odds Ratio (DIV)	Odds Ratio (EXC)
Anti-Nuclear	2.51	3.01
Anti-Free Trade	1.89	2.71
Women's Rights	2.21	2.32
Peace	2.29	2.35
Environmental	2.93	3.57
African American Civil Rights	2.04	2.17
Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights	2.46	2.26
Hispanic Civil Rights	2.37	2.43
Native American Civil Rights	5.50	8.51
Disabled Civil Rights	9.00	1.28
Asian American Civil Rights	2.89	2.08
Anti-Ethnic/Immigrants	2.27	2.29
Pro-Democracy/Human Rights	2.45	2.92
Social Welfare	2.92	3.03
Affordable Housing	3.23	3.48
Ø	3.13	2.96

Note: Odds ratios of issue-changing SMOs (DIV = *Diversification*; EXC = *Excursion*) occupying positions in the center, i.e., the main component, rather than the periphery of social movements, compared to non-issue-changing SMOs.

Together, these results support the idea that issue-changing SMOs contribute to the cohesion of social movements by taking positions in their centers into which they integrate newcomer SMOs.

Issue-Changing SMOs and Continuity

Do issue-changing SMOs also contribute to the continuity of social movements? To answer this question, I investigate how issue-changing SMOs affect the degree to which social movements preserve their culture in the form of protest tactics from one period to another. Table 2 reports linear regression models that support my expectations and show their scope conditions. In

particular, Models 1 and 3 demonstrate that although issue-changing SMOs that have conducted *excursions* positively affect the degree of tactical preservation of social movements, issue-changing SMOs that conduct *diversifications* do not. However, whether issue-changing SMOs' contributions to the continuity of social movements do matter might depend on the turnover level in the SMO population. Higher SMO turnover makes it harder for social movements to preserve their culture and, therefore, more necessary for issue-changing SMOs to act as *preservers*.

Table 2. Fixed Effects OLS Regressions on Tactical Preservation

	Diversification		Excursion	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
IC-SMOs	0.009	–0.011	0.014[*]	–0.012
	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.010)
% Newcomer SMOs		–0.096[*]		–0.121
		(0.043)		(0.057)
IC-SMOs x % Newcomer SMOs		0.041[*]		0.052[*]
		(0.016)		(0.021)
Protest Events	0.001[**]	0.001[*]	0.001[**]	0.000[**]
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
N	153	153	153	153
Within R^2	0.344	0.404	0.425	0.495

Note: Linear regression models with fixed effects for each social movement and three-year period. Standard errors are clustered by social movement and three-year period. IC-SMOs refer to the number of issue-changing SMOs that have conducted *diversifications*/*excursions*, respectively.

Models 2 and 4 support this expectation, showing positive and significant interactions between the share of newcomer SMOs and the number of issue-changing SMOs that have conducted *diversifications* and *excursions*, respectively. Importantly, however, the main effect of issue-changing SMOs is not significant in both models. Implying that the positive effect of issue-changing SMOs on the continuity of social movements is conditional on sufficiently high levels of SMO turnover. Figure 5 illustrates that the minimum share of newcomer SMOs in social movements for issue-changing SMOs to affect continuity positively is 47% for issue-changing SMOs that have conducted *diversifications* and 39% for those that conducted

excursions. These conditions, however, are usually fulfilled as social movements experience a share of 60% newcomer SMOs on average per period (see table A3 in the appendix).
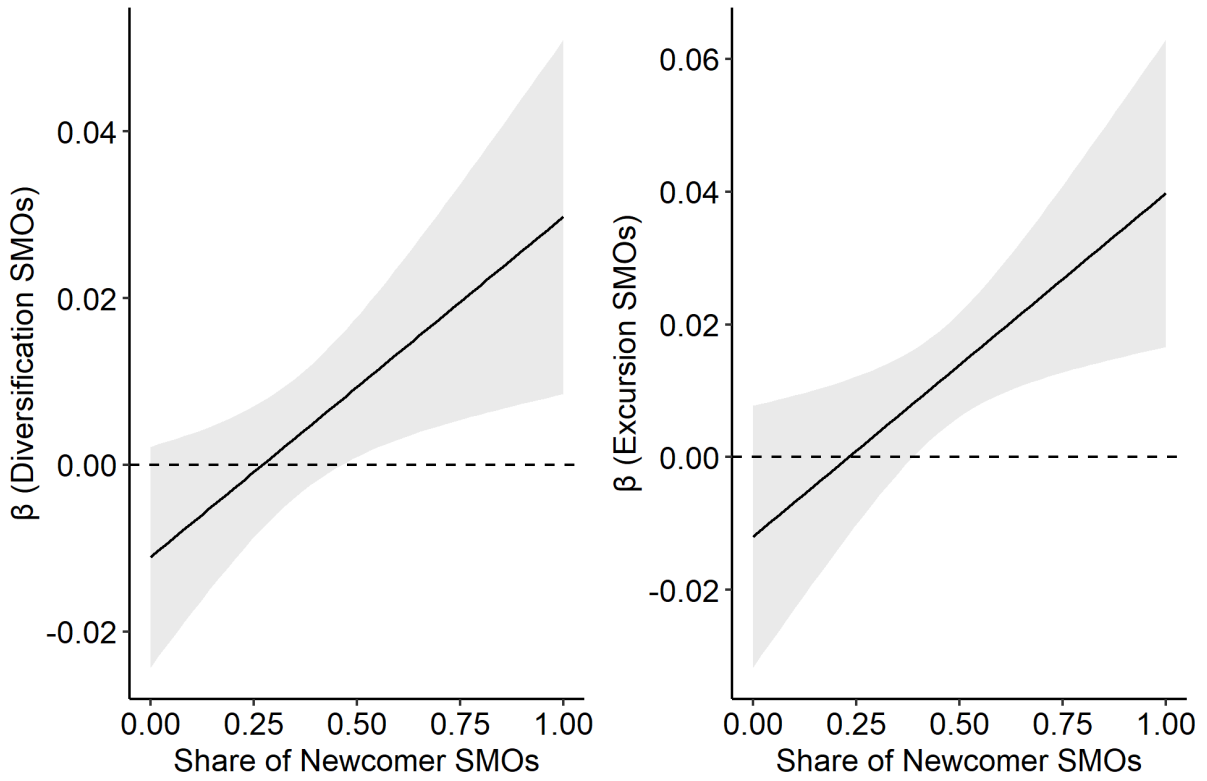

FIG. 5. – Interaction Effect Between Issue-Changing SMOs and Newcomer SMOs.
Note: Magnitude of β-coefficients for issue-changing SMOs that have conducted *diversifications* (left panel) and *excursions* (right panel) over the share of newcomer SMOs. The positive effect of issue-changing SMOs on tactical preservations appears when the confidence intervals (grey area) do not intersect with the horizontal dashed lines, i.e., include zero. Coefficient values are taken from Model 2 and Model 4 in table 2.

In summary, these results show that issue-changing SMOs can contribute considerably to the continuity of social movements by acting as *preservers*. These contributions, however, are conditional on the (usually sufficiently high) levels of turnover in the SMO population. The next question, however, is whether issue-changing SMOs also contribute to the continuity of social movements by acting as *generational brokers*.

Substantively, each issue-changing SMO that has conducted *diversifications* increases the degree of tactical preservation by 1.36% on average in a social movement and each issue-changing SMO that has conducted *excursions* by 1.93%. These are considerable contributions

given that social movements, on average, preserve 25% of their protest tactics from one period to the next (see table A3 in the appendix).

Issue-changing SMOs and Generational Brokerage

Are issue-changing SMOs well-poised to act as *generational brokers* and contribute to the continuity of social movements? Can they constitute channels as brokers between SMOs of different generations, allowing for preserving and passing on social movement culture and distinct knowledge that would otherwise be lost? That should be the case because issue-changing SMOs are long-lived and skilled coalition-builders.

Figure 6, which visualizes the results of negative binomial regressions in four panels, supports this expectation. The upper two panels report null models without control variables and show positive and significant effects of having conducted *diversifications* (upper left panel) and *excursions* (upper right panel) on the number of opportunities to engage in generational brokerage. These total effects indicate that the expected number of opportunities to engage in *generational brokerage* increases 9.68 times for issue-changing SMOs that have conducted *diversifications* and 56.74 times for those that have conducted *excursions*. Even though these effects seem impressive, they must be put into perspective. They refer to the expected number of opportunities to engage in *generational brokerage* that SMOs have across their whole lifespans, which is generally very low.[13] Nonetheless, these results indicate that issue-changing SMOs are well-poised to engage in *generational brokerage*.

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[13] In particular, both null models predict that the expected number of opportunities to engage in generational brokerage is zero for 92% of SMOs in the analysis.
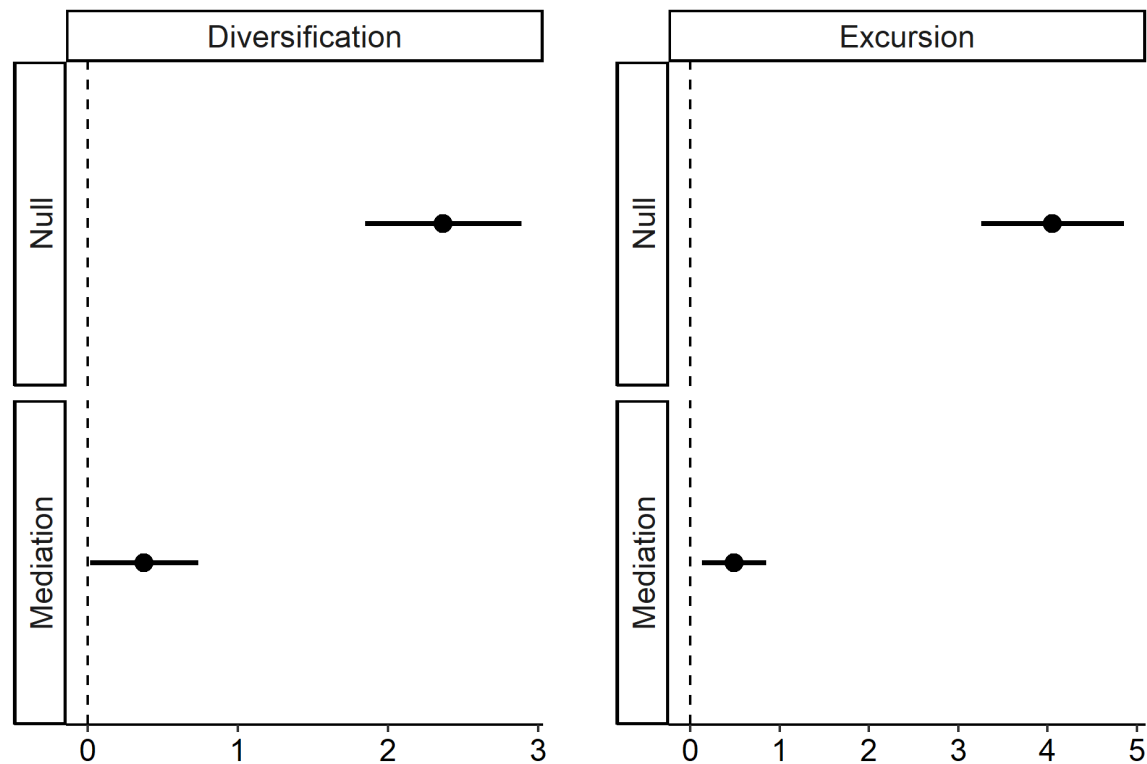
FIG. 6. – Effect of Issue Change on Generational Brokerage

Note: Magnitude of β-coefficients of issue change, i.e., SMOs having conducted *diversifications* or *excursion*, respectively, on generational brokerage. Models are negative binomial regressions with fixed effects/standard errors for/clustered by social movements and starting years. Upper panels show β-coefficients without- and lower panels with control variables. Whiskers indicate 95%-confidence intervals. Coefficient values are taken from table B2 in the appendix.

To assess whether opportunities to engage in *generational brokerage* increase because issue change makes SMOs long-lived and skilled coalition-builders, the bottom panels in figure 6 report the results of mediation models controlling for SMOs' lifespan and number of coalition partners. The strongly diminished sizes of the issue change coefficients in these models support this expectation, as they imply that those two factors largely mediate the effect of issue change on generational brokerage opportunities. Both issue change coefficients, however, remain positive and significant, indicating that issue change also affects *generational brokerage* independent from SMOs' lifespan and number of coalition-partners.

Hence, these results show that issue change improves the opportunities for SMOs to contribute to the continuity of social movements as *generational brokers*. This effect occurs

because issue change makes them long-lived and skilled coalition-builders that can build relationships between SMOs from different generations.

Conclusion

Where do the cohesion and continuity that social movements need to convince policymakers and other gatekeepers of change come from? In this respect, social movement theory has argued that SMOs contribute to the cohesion and continuity of social movements as their backbones and collective memories. Empirically, however, most SMOs are very short-lived, and the levels of SMO turnover that social movements experience surpass that of activists. This contradiction raises the research questions at the explanatory center of this article: How can SMOs contribute to the cohesion and continuity of social movements if they often cannot even sustain themselves? If some SMOs can contribute to the cohesion and continuity of social movements, what enables them, and how do they do it?

To answer these research questions, I argued that, thus far, social movement theory has overlooked longevity and coalition-building skills as necessary premises for SMOs to contribute to the cohesion and continuity of social movements. Issue-changing SMOs, I further proposed, are more likely to fulfill these premises, as issue change has been shown to improve SMOs' lifespan and ability to find coalition partners. In particular, I argued that SMOs changing issues, in the form of *diversifications* and *excursions*, can contribute to the cohesion and continuity of social movements in three ways, namely as *integrators*, *preservers*, and *generational brokers*.

To test these arguments, I used the Dynamics of Collective Action data set to trace the cohesion and continuity of 15 social movements and the issue changes of 4,442 SMOs in the United States between 1960 and 1995. Using counterfactual network simulations, I showed that issue-changing SMOs contribute significantly and considerably to the cohesion of social movements as *integrators*. They position themselves in the center of social movements into

which they integrate newcomer SMOs by forming relationships with them. In this way, issue-changing SMOs connect newcomer SMOs to themselves and indirectly to all other SMOs in the center of social movements. I also demonstrated that issue-changing SMOs contribute to the continuity of social movements in two ways. First, applying linear fixed effect regression, I showed that the number of issue-changing SMOs positively affected the degree of tactical preservation in social movements. This positive effect, although conditional on (usually sufficiently high) levels of SMO turnover, demonstrates that issue-changing SMOs can contribute to the continuity of social movements as *preservers*. By being long-lived, they preserve the culture of social movements, such as their collective identities, tactical repertoires, frames, and knowledge, between protest cycles. Second, using negative binomial fixed effects regression, I showed that conducting issue changes positively affected the number of generational brokerage opportunities for SMOs by making them long-lived and skilled coalition-builders. Issue-changing SMOs are, therefore, well-poised to contribute to the continuity of social movements as *generational brokers*. They also contribute to the continuity of social movements by brokering between SMOs from different generations, constituting channels that enable the preservation and transmission of otherwise lost local knowledge.

My findings contribute and speak to the existing literature on social movements and SMOs in several ways. First, I advance social movement theories relying on SMOs as contributors to the cohesion and continuity of social movements by formulating necessary but previously neglected scope conditions (e.g., McCarthy and Zald 1977; Staggenborg 1998; Gongaware 2010). In particular, I reveal the contradiction between the assumption that SMOs contribute to the cohesion and continuity of social movements and their ephemerality, identifying longevity and skillful coalition-building as premises that most SMOs do not fulfill. Second, I empirically demonstrate a solution to this contradiction by showing that issue-changing SMOs often fulfill these premises, as changing issues make them long-lived and skilled coalition-builders. In particular, I demonstrate that issue-changing SMOs, compared to

non-issue-changing SMOs, contribute to the cohesion and continuity of social movements as *integrators*, *preservers*, and *generational brokers*. Third, by showing the importance of issue changes for the cohesion and continuity of social movements, I contribute to the overlooked topic of issue change, emphasizing its importance. In neglect of issue change, past social movement research has either focused on tactical change or (de)radicalization (e.g., Messinger 1954; McAdam 1983; Wang and Soule 2012; Wang and Soule 2016) or framed changing goals negatively as signs of co-optation, loss of disruptiveness, and the prioritizing of survival over social movement causes (Michels 1962[1911]; Zald and Ash 1966; Piven and Cloward 1977; Meyer and Tarrow 1998; Tilly et al. 2020). Ironically, it seems to be precisely those SMOs easily marked as traitors for changing their issues that make social movements successful by providing the cohesion and continuity necessary to convince policymakers and other gatekeepers of social change.

Finally, I acknowledge several limitations of this article, providing opportunities for future research. First, operationalizing social movement cohesion as cohesion in coalition networks is not without alternatives. Using the same data, Wang et al. (2019), for instance, measure social movement cohesion as *claim cohesion*. According to this measure, social movement cohesion depends on how well social movements connect their particular claims. Although it would be reasonable to assume that issue-changing SMOs undermine claim cohesion in social movements, I argue otherwise based on my findings. As *preservers*, issue-changing SMOs are likely to preserve existing social movement claims and connect them to arising claims of newcomer SMOs, thereby improving claim cohesion. However, it is up to future research to test whether issue-changing SMOs affect claim cohesion in social movements. Second, spatial proximity between SMOs possibly confounds the positive relationship between issue-changing SMOs and social movement cohesion. SMOs might be more likely to change their issues and form relationships when operating spatially closer to one another. Third, I could only show that issue-changing SMOs tend to have more generational

brokerage opportunities. Investigating whether they indeed act as *generational brokers* provides another opportunity for future research. Lastly, using the preservation of protest tactics to operationalize the continuity of social movements and their culture might raise objections. While protest tactics are a core component of social movement culture, social movements also need tactical innovation to stay disruptive, as existing protest tactics tend to wear off over time (McAdam 1983). Hence, other elements of social movement culture might be more suitable to operationalize social movement continuity. I acknowledged this tension by ensuring that my measure of tactical preservation does not penalize tactical innovation. Interestingly, this tension between protest tactics as culture and protest tactics as instrumental means also reflects the broader tension between continuity and change in social movements, which they both need to succeed. In this regard, my findings offer yet another starting point for future research: Issue-changing SMOs providing cohesion and continuity as *integrators*, *preservers*, and *generational brokers* might form a symbiotic relationship with newcomer SMOs who presumably act as *innovators*, enabling social movements to find a balance between continuity and change.

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Appendix A

To determine whether an SMO has undertaken an issue change at a protest event, I compare the issues it puts forth at that protest event with its issue portfolio from all previous protest events. That is, an issue change takes place if an SMO protests for an issue for the first time, i.e., an issue it has never previously protested for, at a protest event.

To determine the type of an issue change, i.e., *substitution*, *diversification*, *excursion*, or *exploration*, I trace whether an SMO keeps or drops its set of old issues *O*, i.e., the origin issues for which an SMO has already protested in the past, and its set of new issues *N*, i.e., the destination issues for which an SMO protest for the first time, at each subsequent protest event within three years after an issue change.[14] In particular, I calculate the stability of the old issue set s_O and new issue set s_N as the share of all subsequent protest events within the next three years at which an SMO put forth issues that fall into the set of old issues of *O* and set of new issues *N*, respectively.
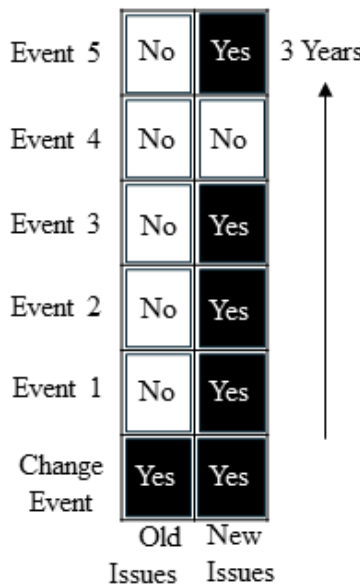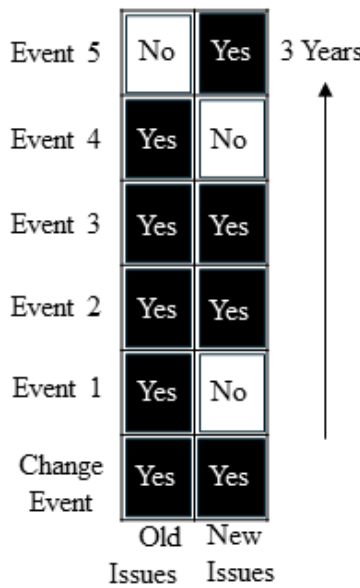
For illustration, if an SMO protests for its set of old issues *O* at three out of five and its set of new issues *N* at four out of five subsequent protest events after an issue change, s_O takes on the value of 0.6 and s_N the value of 0.8. Values of s_O and s_N range from 0 to 1, where a value of 0 indicates that within three years after an issue change, an SMO never protests for any issue from the issue sets *O* and *N*, respectively, and a value of 1 that an SMO protests for any issues in the issue sets *O* and *N*, respectively, at each subsequent protest event. As such extreme values are rare, I set a threshold of lower than 0.2 to determine that an SMO drops its issue sets *O* and *N*, respectively.[15] Hence, if $s_O < 0.2$, the SMO drops its old issues in *O* over time.

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[14] This restriction of the period of subsequent protest events is necessary as I treat issues changes as strategic maneuvers. I chose a window of three years as this corresponds to the average length of protest cycles in the DoCA data (cf. Wang and Soule 2016).

[15] I choose this relatively low threshold to be conservative regarding the decision when an SMO has dropped an issue set. However, results are robust to changes in the threshold to 0.1 and 0.3. Also, a threshold of 0 identifies all issue changes as *diversifications*. As in this case, an SMO keeps its old issue set *O* and new issue set *S* by default, regardless of whether it protests for them even once in the next three years.

Similarly, if $s_N < 0.2$, the SMO drops its new issues in N over time. In substantive terms, for an SMO to keep its sets of old issues O or new issues N, it needs to protest for these respective sets at least at one-fifth of its subsequent protest events in the next three years after an issue change. Depending on whether SMO has kept or dropped its old and new issues, I classify the change as *substitution*, *diversification*, *excursion*, or *exploration*. Table A1 in the appendix provides examples, definitions, and ranges of the stability values s_O and s_N for each issue change type

Table A1. Definitions, Examples, and Classification of Issue Change Types

	Substitution	Diversification	Excursion	Exploration
Example	$s_O = 0.0$ $s_N = 0.8$	$s_O = 0.8$ $s_N = 0.6$	$s_O = 0.8$ $s_N = 0.0$	$s_O = 0.0$ $s_N = 0.0$
	Event 5: No / Yes — 3 Years	Event 5: No / Yes — 3 Years	Event 5: Yes / No — 3 Years	Event 5: No / No — 3 Years
	Event 4: No / No	Event 4: Yes / No	Event 4: Yes / No	Event 4: No / No
	Event 3: No / Yes	Event 3: Yes / Yes	Event 3: No / No	Event 3: No / No
	Event 2: No / Yes	Event 2: Yes / Yes	Event 2: Yes / No	Event 2: No / No
	Event 1: No / Yes	Event 1: Yes / No	Event 1: Yes / No	Event 1: No / No
	Change Event: Yes / Yes	Change Event: Yes / Yes	Change Event: Yes / Yes	Change Event: Yes / Yes
	Old Issues / New Issues	Old Issues / New Issues	Old Issues / New Issues	Old Issues / New Issues
Definition	An SMO drops its set of old issues O but keeps its set of new issues N over time.	An SMO keeps both its set of old issues in O and its set of new issues N over time.	An SMO keeps its set of old issues O but drops its set of new issues N over time.	An SMO drops both its sets of old issues O and its set of new issues in N over time.
Events with Old Issues (%)	Less than 20% $s_O < 0.2$	At least 20% $s_O \geq 0.2$	At least 20% $s_O \geq 0.2$	Less than 20% $s_O < 0.2$
Events with New Issues (%)	At least 20% $s_N \geq 0.2$	At least 20% $s_N \geq 0.2$	Less than 20% $s_N < 0.2$	Less than 20% $s_N < 0.2$

Note: The old issue set O contains all issues an SMO had before a change event, i.e., a protest event with an issue change. The new issue set N contains the new issues an SMO adopts at the change event. In the examples, the SMOs organize five protest events in the three years after their change events, but the number varies in reality. 'Yes' and 'No' indicate whether an SMO protested for its old issues O and new issues N at a particular protest event. If the share of protest events with the old issues set s_O or the new issue set s_N is lower than 0.2, an SMO has dropped its old issues O or new issues N respectively.

Table A2. Descriptive Statistics on Issue-Changing SMOs and Social Movement Cohesion Parameters.

	SMOs (Nodes)	IC-SMOs (DIV)	IC- SMOs (EXC)	Unreachable Pairs	Components	Main Component
Anti-Nuclear	254	36	54	79.11 %	20	116
Anti – Free Trade	36	10	16	71.90 %	3	19
Women's Rights	367	33	57	74.85 %	22	184
Peace	454	60	77	78.01 %	20	213
Environmental	368	23	28	90.93 %	36	110
African American Civil Rights	941	81	113	77.54 %	57	446
Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights	186	14	29	82.46 %	11	78
Hispanic Civil Rights	257	38	60	78.12 %	20	120
Native American Civil Rights	96	8	13	94.89 %	10	21
Disabled Civil Rights	21	3	5	91.43 %	4	5
Asian American Civil Rights	58	6	8	96.01 %	8	8
Anti-Ethnic/Immigrants	282	38	56	78.75 %	15	130
Pro-Democracy/Human Rights	576	82	125	82.78 %	36	239
Social Welfare	1,975	121	162	88.76 %	132	662
Affordable Housing	416	37	57	87.64 %	28	146

Note: IC-SMOs = issue-changing SMOs; DIV = *Diversification*; EXC = *Excursion*.

Table A3. Descriptives Statistics for Continuity and Generational Brokerage Analysis

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Missings
Continuity						
Tactical Preservation	153	0.25	0.17	0.00	0.69	12
IC – SMOs (DIV)	165	6.46	7.68	0	46	0
IC – SMOs (EXC)	165	5.79	6.71	0	38	0
Newcomer SMOs	153	0.60	0.20	0.00	1.00	12
Protest Events	165	57.28	93.64	0	839	0
Generational Brokerage						
Generational Brokerage	6,287	3.25	84.51	0.00	5,535	0
Issue Change (DIV)	6,287	0.09	0.29	0	1	0
Issue Change (EXC)	6,287	0.14	0.35	0	1	0
Lifespan	6,287	4.62	8.80	0	35	0
Partners	6,287	2.10	5.02	0	149	0

Note: IC-SMOs = issue-changing SMOs; DIV = *Diversification*; EXC = *Excursion*.

Appendix B

Table B1. Differences in Cohesion Indicators between original and counterfactual coalition networks.

	Δ Unreachable Pairs (DIV)	Δ Components (DIV)	Δ Main Component (DIV)	Δ Unreachable Pairs (EXC)	Δ Components (EXC)	Δ Main Component (EXC)
Anti-Nuclear	+18.52 pp.	+55.00 %	−74.14%	+20.23 pp.	+50.00 %	−91.38 %
Anti – Free Trade	+17.94 pp.	+33.33 %	−57.89 %	+24.41 pp.	+0.00 %	−84.21 %
Women's Rights	+11.98 pp.	+22.73 %	−34.24 %	+24.05 pp.	+100.00 %	−84.24 %
Peace	+17.81 pp.	+75.00 %	−62.44 %	+21.69 pp.	+120.00 %	−94.84 %
Environmental	+8.06 pp.	+38.89 %	−73.64 %	+8.25 pp.	+36.11 %	−77.27 %
African American Civil Rights	+11.00 pp.	+28.07 %	−34.75 %	+22.25 pp.	+94.74 %	−93.50 %
Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights	+14.79 pp.	+81.82 %	−67.95 %	+16.81 pp.	+63.64 %	−85.90 %
Hispanic Civil Rights	+16.67 pp.	+15.00 %	−60.00 %	+21.30 pp.	+65.00 %	−92.50 %
Native American Civil Rights	+4.25 pp.	+30.00 %	−80.95 %	+4.26 pp.	+10.00 %	−80.95 %
Disabled Civil Rights	+3.34 pp.	−25.00 %	−20.00 %	+2.74 pp.	−50.00 %	−20.00 %
Asian American Civil Rights	+2.10 pp.	+12.50 %	−50.00 %	+2.20 pp.	+0.00 %	−50.00 %
Anti-Ethnic/Immigrants	+18.43 pp.	+100.00 %	−69.23 %	+20.94 pp.	+126.67 %	−94.62 %
Pro-Democracy/Human Rights	+14.40 pp.	+30.56 %	−65.69 %	+17.02 pp.	+52.78 %	−95.82 %
Social Welfare	+7.70 pp.	+31.06 %	−47.43 %	+10.90 pp.	+65.15 %	−85.05 %
Affordable Housing	+8.80 pp.	+28.57 %	−52.06 %	+12.14 pp.	+85.71 %	−93.15 %
Ø	+11.72 pp.	+37.17 %	−56.69 %	+15.28 pp.	+54.65%	−81.56 %

Note: Differences of cohesion indicators in counterfactual- compared to original coalition networks for each social movement. Changes in the share of unreachable pairs are expressed in percentage points, changes in the number of components in percentages, and changes in main component size also in percentages.

Table B2. Fixed Effects Negative Binomial Regressions on Generational Brokerage

	Diversification		Excursion	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Issue Change	2.368***	0.376*	4.056***	0.490**
	(0.266)	(0.184)	(0.408)	(0.184)
Lifespan		0.059***		0.056***
		(0.014)		(0.015)
Partners		0.373***		0.361***
		(0.013)		(0.014)
Intercept	3.622***	–4.491***	0.120	–4.583***
	(0.276)	(0.589)	(0.370)	(0.555)
N	6,287	6,287	6,287	6,287
AIC	5,836	4,578	5,599	4,573
Log-Likelihood	–2,875	–2,235	–2,748	–2,233
Theta	0.05	0.27	0.07	0.28

Note: Linear regression models with fixed effects for social movement and starting year. Standard errors are clustered by social movement and starting year. In the Diversification and Excursion models issue change refers to whether SMOs have conducted *diversifications*/*excursions*, respectively.