"DID YOU NOTICE THAT?" THEORIZING DIFFERENCES IN THE CAPACITY TO APPREHEND INSTITUTIONAL CONTRADICTIONS

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Over the past decade, institutional researchers have relied extensively on the premise that institutional contradictions are key drivers of institutional instability and institutional change. In this article we argue that apprehending institutional contradictions—that is, experiencing institutional arrangements as provisional and potentially changeable upon encountering the contradictions—is more problematic than typically acknowledged. Drawing on insights from constructive developmental theory, we develop an individual-level theory that seeks to explain the differences in people's capacity to apprehend institutional contradictions. The resulting framework proposes that there are important differences among people with respect to the nature of their investment in institutional arrangements that correspond to the differences in both blockages and facilitators of apprehension. The framework contributes important insights to the study of embedded agency and inhabited institutionalism, as well as strategic change.

Institutional contradictions are "ruptures and inconsistencies both among and within the established social arrangements" (Seo & Creed, 2002: 225). They have long been identified as key triggers of institutional instability and key antecedents of institutional change (e.g., Creed, DeJordy, & Lok, 2010; Friedland & Alford, 1991; Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006; Rao, Monin, & Durand, 2003). Accordingly, institutional scholars have garnered many insights into the possible antecedents of institutional contradictions and actors' responses to them (e.g., Besharov & Smith, 2014; Greenwood, Raynard, Kodeih, Micelotta, & Lounsbury, 2011; Kraatz & Block, 2008; Pache & Santos, 2010).

This extensive body of literature is rooted in the fundamental assumption that institutional contradictions, if they exist, will be apprehended by actors. However, apprehension, which we define as *experiencing one's institutional milieu as provisional and potentially changeable*, is far from

an inevitable experience of institutional contradictions. People often experience institutional arrangements not only as inevitable but natural (Bourdieu, 2000; Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991; Oakes, Townley, & Cooper, 1998; Suchman, 1995), which potentially renders institutional contradictions virtually imperceptible (Glynos, Klimecki, & Willmott, 2012; Kennedy & Fiss, 2013; Voronov & Vince, 2012). Nonetheless, people are *sometimes* able to break through the blinders imposed on them by extant institutional arrangements, and *some* people are more likely to do so than others. Accordingly, our objective in this article is to theorize the differences in people's capacity to apprehend institutional contradictions.

Consistent with the inhabited perspective on institutions, we acknowledge that people are more than reified "actors" who process and respond to institutional stimuli (Bechky, 2011; Hallett & Ventresca, 2006). Rather, people have a variety of experiences in various institutional spheres, resulting in the development of durable investments in particular institutional arrangements that are imprinted in their minds and internalized in the form of more or less durable dispositions (Bourdieu, 2000). These dispositions may transcend a specific social situation or focal institutional arrangement (Creed, Hudson, Okhuysen, & Smith-Crowe, 2014; Patriotta & Lanzara, 2006),

and novel situations resulting from an exposure to alternative institutional arrangements may not necessarily activate alternative behavioral scripts (cf. Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2012) because people may not recognize the need to alter their behavior in response to a novel situation (e.g., Molinsky, 2013; Swidler, 1986). Nonetheless, it should be acknowledged that people undergo lifelong growth and development (Kegan, 1982, 1994; Mezirow, 2000), impacting and potentially altering their capacity to experience and apprehend institutional contradictions. Thus, to understand the complicity of institutional contradictions in institutional stability and change, it is necessary to complement the prior focus on the structural properties of institutional arrangements that create, exacerbate, or mitigate institutional contradictions with careful theorization of the differences in how people experience and apprehend the institutional contradictions they are exposed to.

To develop an individual-level theoretical model of the differences in persons'[1] capacity to experience and apprehend institutional contradictions, we utilize constructive developmental theory (CDT; Drago-Severson, 2004; Kegan, 1982, 1994). The theory's focus on how people's lifelong experiences make them differentially capable of responding to and reflecting on the limits of their knowledge makes it valuable for theorizing how people differ in their experiences of and capacity to apprehend institutional contradictions. Yet because institutional analysis requires studying people in a context that shapes their subjectivity and avoiding a purely psychological lens that strips that context (Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009; Emirbayer & Goldberg, 2005; Voronov, 2014), we loosen some of CDT's explanations of inhibitors to apprehension conceived of by CDT scholars as intrapersonal. Rather, we acknowledge that blockages to apprehension are not merely psychological defense mechanisms but are also located at a meso level as differential investments in different aspects of institutional arrangements (i.e., specific interpersonal relations, desired identity, or desire for mutuality) that potentially obscure persons' ability to sense the conflicting

institutional prescriptions that constitute an institutional contradiction. This enables us to assess more precisely how persons at different mindset stages that constitute different ways of knowing (Kegan, 1994) apprehend institutional contradictions.

We make the following contributions. First, we develop an individual-level theory of differential capacities to experience and apprehend institutional contradictions that acknowledges the importance of both the person and the institutional environment while retaining both as facilitators and constraints of human agency. As such, we contribute to the debate on embedded agency that has been of great concern not only for institutional scholars (Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009; Thornton et al., 2012) but for organizational and social theorists in general (e.g., Emirbayer & Mische, 1998).

Second, we complement research focusing on how contradictions come about and the structural features of fields and organizations that either exacerbate or mitigate these contradictions (Besharov & Smith, 2014; Pache & Santos, 2010, 2013b; Reay & Hinings, 2009), with a detailed assessment of how people currently located at different mindset stages experience institutional contradictions differently. Thus, we explore a fundamental mechanism that links the existence of an institutional contradiction to its efficacy as an engine of institutional instability and institutional transformation. We focus specifically on institutional contradictions that involve conflicting institutional prescriptions resulting from a person's exposure to conflicting institutional logics[2] either within a specific domain of activity, such as at work (e.g., Battilana & Dorado, 2010), or across domains of activity, such as between work and family (e.g., Dick, 2006; Friedland & Alford, 1991).

Third, our analysis of the differences and changes in persons' capacity to apprehend institutional contradictions contributes to an inhabited view of institutions (Barley, 2008; Bechky, 2011; Hallett, 2010; Hallett & Ventresca, 2006). We acknowledge that institutional work is performed by human agents (Willmott, 2011) who are more intricate than the "institutional actorhood" category typically used by institutional scholars. Accordingly,

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[1] We follow Hallett and Ventresca (2006), Willmott (2011), and Creed et al. (2014) in replacing the term *individual* with *person* "in order to keep our focus on the socially-embedded, interdependent, relational, and emotional nature of persons' lived experiences of institutional arrangements" (Creed et al., 2014: 278).

[2] We define institutional logics as "overarching sets of principles that . . . provide guidelines on how to interpret and function in social situations" (Greenwood et al., 2011: 318).

we theorize how the "'personhood' of the agents studied" (Voronov & Vince, 2012: 76) impacts their capacity to apprehend institutional contradictions, which, in turn, influences how they behave as institutional actors.

The remainder of the article is structured as follows. We first review the literature emphasizing the importance of institutional contradictions for institutional instability and the possibility of institutional change, and argue that the difficulty of apprehending institutional contradictions has been underemphasized in prior research. We then introduce our conceptual framework and use it to theorize the differences in people's capacity to apprehend institutional contradictions. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of our arguments for future research in institutional theory and strategic change.

APPREHENDING INSTITUTIONAL CONTRADICTIONS AS A TRIGGER OF INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

The key role of institutional contradictions in the study of institutions is that they "*may facilitate a change in actors' consciousness* such that the relative dominance of some institutional arrangements is no longer seen as inevitable" (Seo & Creed, 2002: 233, emphasis added). Thus, institutional contradictions have been credited with shifting actors' orientation "from unreflective participation in institutional reproduction to [an] imaginative critique of existing arrangements" (Seo & Creed, 2002: 231), motivating them to transform these arrangements or to find creative ways to solve and transcend such conflicts (Creed et al., 2010; Goodrick & Reay, 2011; Greenwood et al., 2011; Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006). Contradictions thus alert people to the gap between the way things are and the way they might or should be (Sewell, 1997; Swidler, 1986; Weber & Glynn, 2006), which allows alternative understandings, ideas, and ways of being to emerge that have been effaced or obscured by dominant institutional arrangements.

In prior research scholars have focused on the structural facets of institutional contradictions, including the number of conflicting logics present (Goodrick & Reay, 2011), the level of conflict between them (Pache & Santos, 2010), and organizations' and persons' relative exposure to them (Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006; Reay, Golden-Biddle

& Germann, 2006), as well as on actors' responses (Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006; Hensmans, 2003) and how such contradictions can be managed at the organizational and field levels (Besharov & Smith, 2014; Reay & Hinings, 2009). However, there has been little research into how people experience institutional contradictions (Creed et al., 2010; Suddaby, 2010). As a result, we believe researchers have underestimated the difficulty of apprehending institutional contradictions, despite their "objective" existence.

Furthermore, implicit in the various instances of institutional change and creation documented in prior research is the possibility that some people might have a greater capacity to apprehend institutional contradictions than others, and that different people might apprehend institutional contradictions under different circumstances. Hence, some people become institutional change agents while others do not (Emirbayer & Goldberg, 2005; Mutch, 2007). Thus, research on antecedents and responses to institutional contradictions should be complemented with a more detailed treatment of *the differences in people's capacities* to experience and apprehend the institutional contradictions that might exist between the various institutional arrangements that govern their lives. In this section we briefly review how institutional contradictions have been treated in prior research before explicating the key features of apprehension and introducing the theoretical framework we subsequently use to theorize differences in people's capacities to experience and apprehend institutional contradictions.

Features of Institutional Contradictions

Institutional contradictions are tensions resulting from the presence of conflicting and potentially incompatible institutional norms (Seo & Creed, 2002). The extent to which institutional prescriptions conflict with each other varies, and researchers have documented various structural features of fields and organizations that may make institutional prescriptions more or less difficult to reconcile (Besharov & Smith, 2014; Friedland & Alford, 1991; Pache & Santos, 2010, 2013b; Reay & Hinings, 2009). Pache and Santos (2010) proposed a useful distinction between conflicting institutional prescriptions constituting contradictions around *goals* (i.e., what is our ultimate purpose?) and *means* (i.e., how do we

accomplish our goals?). The former contradictions are especially challenging for organizations and their members because "goals are expressions of the core system of values and references of organizational constituencies and are, as such, not easily challenged or negotiable" (Pache & Santos, 2010: 460). The latter reflect that logics themselves may have internal contradictions or may be underspecified (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Greenwood et al., 2011; Sewell, 1997), creating ambiguity about precisely how such goals as profitability and development should be pursued.

In the course of their lives, people are routinely exposed to institutional contradictions around goals either within a particular institutional sphere where conflicting logics might vie for dominance or across institutional spheres that are governed primarily by different logics. For example, contradictions within a particular institutional sphere such as at work are apparent in Zilber's (2002) study of an Israeli rape crisis center, which shows how the dominant feminist logic was challenged by the therapeutic logic introduced by newer volunteers. Other examples include Battilana and Dorado's (2010) and Besharov's (2014) studies illustrating the challenges people have navigating the contradictions between development and commercial microfinance logics, and commercial and community, respectively. Contradictions across institutional spheres are apparent in Dick's (2006) study of part-time police officers in the United Kingdom and Ladge, Clair, and Greenberg's (2012) study of female professionals' attempts to reconcile their images of themselves as professionals and mothers. Both studies illustrate the challenges people face as they attempt to navigate the different domains of their lives, each primarily governed by a different logic that makes competing claims on their selfhood.

The premise that guides our subsequent theorizing is that the mere presence of an institutional contradiction resulting from conflicting institutional pressures impinging on a person's life does not itself lead to the person's response to the contradictions. Rather, the presence of institutional contradictions results in a person being exposed to the conflicting institutional demands. We do not imply that a person can be completely "oblivious" to the presence of an institutional contradiction. We suggest instead that people differ in how they experience institutional contradictions, and, as such, different people are not equally likely to experience the institutional arrangements that govern their lives as changeable or malleable upon being exposed to the contradiction. Rather, it is necessary to unpack how different people might experience the same contradiction differently and how the different ways in which people are exposed to a contradiction might alter their experience of it. Apprehension is a specific kind of experience.

Unpacking Apprehension

In prior work institutional scholars have not explicitly explicated what apprehension is, and before theorizing the differences in people's capacity to apprehend institutional contradictions, we need to clarify the nature of this process. As we noted in the introduction, apprehension of institutional contradictions involves a shift toward *experiencing the institutional arrangements that a person inhabits as provisional and potentially changeable*, rather than the more normal experience of them as natural and unquestionable (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Zucker, 1977).

First, we argue that apprehension encompasses both *cognitive* and *affective* facets. We use "apprehension," as opposed to "recognition," of institutional contradictions to avoid implying that this is a primarily cognitive, analytic, or intellectual process, which "recognition" may suggest. Institutional arrangements are reproduced and maintained to the extent that people enact behavioral scripts that are consistent with them (Barley, 1986; Barley & Tolbert, 1997; Bourdieu, 2000; Lok & De Rond, 2013). We do not deny the importance of the cognitive facet; however, because "institutions depend, both in their formation and their core, on a passionate identification" (Friedland, 2013: 593) of the participating members, as discussed below, such emotional connections can be especially powerful in obscuring and masking institutional contradictions (Creed et al., 2010; Glynos et al., 2012; McNay, 2008; Žižek, 1999). We thus acknowledge both the cognitive and affective facets of apprehension.

Cognitive apprehension means surfacing tacit and intuitive understandings of institutional arrangements and subjecting these understandings to rigorous reflection and deliberation (Gondo & Amis, 2013; Schön, 1983). It requires people to "think

about how they think" (Furnari, 2014; Howard-Grenville, Golden-Biddle, Irwin, & Mao, 2011; Turner, 1987: 102). It also requires recovering categories that have dissipated or been marginalized or suppressed by the dominant institutional arrangements (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991; Kennedy & Fiss, 2013), thereby enabling new ones to emerge (Jones, Maoret, Massa, & Svejenova, 2012) and making novel links between existing categories (Wry & Lounsbury, 2013; Zerubavel, 2003).

Affective apprehension is a rupture of emotional investment in institutional arrangements. Emotional investment refers to the emotional attachment of a person to the fundamental ideals that define particular institutional arrangements (Stavrakakis, 2008; Voronov & Vince, 2012; Žižek, 1999) and discipline the person's subjectivity (Creed et al., 2014) such that these ideals structure the person's desires and aspirations. In an earlier article (Voronov &Vince, 2012) we proposed that, in the absence of emotional apprehension of institutional contradictions, purely cognitive apprehension is often insufficient to bring about the possibility of institutional change. In fact, retaining emotional investment in institutional arrangements that a person cognitively recognizes as suboptimal is likely to trigger defense mechanisms (Argyris, 1994)—thoughts, feelings, and actions aimed at reducing emotional discomfort and anxiety and repressing awareness of the need for change (Žižek, 1999, 2000). Other researchers have advanced similar arguments (e.g., Contu, 2008; Emirbayer & Goldberg, 2005; Friedland, 2013; Hallett, 2010; Kellogg, 2011), acknowledging the insufficiency of apprehending the need for change when it does not alter people's emotional investment in extant institutional arrangements.

In practice, the two facets are closely intertwined, and separating them is not always feasible (Emirbayer & Goldberg, 2005; Zerubavel, 1991). For example, in her study of the social movement ACT UP, which advocates on behalf of people with AIDS, Gould (2009) observed that during the early years of the epidemic, a number of LGBT people rejected, at the cognitive level, the notion that gay men were responsible for AIDS, although it resonated with some of them emotionally. Such emotional susceptibility to a discourse that demonized them made some people less able to recognize opportunities and the need to mobilize for change. In other words,

the lack of affective apprehension overrode the efficacy of cognitive apprehension. Conversely, cognitive reflection on affective states is helpful for assigning meaning to them (Gould, 2009) and potentially facilitating or hindering apprehension. Thus, although we identify the cognitive and affective components of apprehension, the distinction is an analytic one and not meant to imply that the two facets are unrelated.

Second, we argue that apprehension is more than a psychological process of altering one's existing knowledge or learning new things. Instead, it is a critique of both one's taken-for-granted social world and one's place in it, "distilled into the shared forms that seem to have such historical longevity as to be above history—and, hence, to have the capacity to generate new substantive practices along the surfaces of economy and society" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991: 318; Friedland, 2009). It is a process of wrestling with one's own role in reproducing the institutional status quo and exploring a new way of acting.

Deliberating the validity of the institutional arrangements that endow our lives with meaning can be distressing, anxiety provoking, anger inducing, or even terrifying (Creed et al., 2010; Hallett, 2010; Stavrakakis, 2008; Žižek, 1999). And it can be made even more difficult by the fact that some institutional norms are transmitted through childhood socialization and educational systems (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Calarco, 2014; Froyum, 2010; Smith & Kleinman, 1989) that intensely inculcate them in people's minds and bodily practice. Thus, apprehension does not imply a permanent move from a state of misrecognition to one of total knowledge (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992; Bourdieu, 2000). Rather, it might involve a brief and fleeting state of "inchoate awareness" whereby "people discern acts and facts but cannot or do not order them into narrative descriptions or even into articulate conceptions of the world" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991: 29). Apprehension then might not even require conscious reflection but instead might be *immanent* in apparently spontaneous subversive acts of resistance (e.g., Prasad & Prasad, 2000; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011).[3]

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[3] We do not make pronouncements about the efficacy of such spontaneous acts to bring about institutional change, since some scholars have expressed suspicion about their significance in institutional change (e.g., Contu, 2008). For analytic purposes, we find the distinction between apprehension and action to be meaningful.

Although people routinely navigate across several institutional spheres, institutions "seek exclusive and undivided loyalty and they attempt to reduce the claims of competing roles and status positions on those they wish to encompass within their boundaries" (Coser, 1974: 4). Whereas all institutions attempt to do so, not all are equally successful. For example, institutional arrangements rooted in religious beliefs tend to exercise very strong control over people (Creed et al., 2010; Gutierrez, Howard-Grenville, & Scully, 2010; Kintz, 1997), controlling both the public and private spheres of people's lives (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2006). Institutional arrangements rooted in professions similarly require wholesale commitment from people in terms of their professional and private lives (e.g., Covaleski, Dirsmith, Heian, & Samuel, 1998; Kellogg, 2011; Michel, 2011). The painful nature of wrestling with institutional contradiction is exacerbated to the extent that some institutional contradictions, such as being "gay" and a "priest" (Creed et al., 2010), a "devout Catholic" and a "reformer" (Gutierrez et al., 2010), or a "professional" and a "mother" (Ladge et al., 2012), are tied to the very sense of self that transcends a specific domain of activity (e.g., work).

Creed et al.'s (2010) study of gay ministers who encountered institutionalized heterosexism in American Protestant mainline denominations is an excellent illustration of the challenges of apprehension discussed above. The respondents in the study varied in the way they apprehended the institutional contradictions that impinged on the personal and professional facets of their lives. Some demonstrated minimal levels of apprehension, experiencing negative and mainly self-directed emotions, such as self-hatred and shame, because of their sexual orientation. In contrast, others developed the capacity to explicitly acknowledge the conflict between their personal identity and the professional institutional norms they saw as incompatible with that identity. Still others attained the ability to "be the change" by creatively transcending the dualistic oppositions and experiencing both themselves and the professional norms that governed their work as a provisional toolkit of meanings for both their personal and professional identities. The differences in apprehension implicit in the study foreshadow our theorization of differential capacities to experience and apprehend institutional contradictions.

Theorizing the Capacity for Apprehending Institutional Contradictions

Since institutional work is performed by human agents (Bechky, 2011; Hallett & Ventresca, 2006; Willmott, 2011), we acknowledge that people's lifelong experiences in a variety of institutional spheres influence the differential capacities they develop for apprehending institutional contradictions. We utilize CDT to help us theorize how people differ in their capacity to experience and apprehend institutional contradictions.

CDT. CDT, as advanced by Kegan (1982, 1994), is an extension of Piaget's seminal work on the progressive developmental unfolding of the capacity for complex thought throughout childhood and into adolescence. It addresses this lifelong psychosocial development (e.g., Fisher, Rooke, & Torbert, 2000; Loevinger & Blasi, 1976; McCauley, Drath, Palus, O'Connor, & Baker, 2006; Rooke & Torbert, 2005), arguing that development does not cease once a person reaches adulthood (Kegan & Lahey, 2009).

We use CDT as the starting point of our theory for two reasons. First, of particular importance to CDT researchers is the possibility of transforming people's ways of knowing—their *meaning-making mindset stages*. A person's meaning-making mindset stage is the lens that filters all experiences (Kegan, 1994; Kegan & Lahey, 2001; McCauley et al., 2006) and shapes a person's capacity for reflecting on experience. This acknowledgment of the differences in the way people perceive and reflect on the world, along with the recognition that these differences alter over the course of a person's life, make CDT useful for theorizing differences in the ways people apprehend institutional contradictions.

Second, CDT attends especially closely to people's emotional experiences, with each mindset stage associated with particular desires, fears, and anxieties that drive a person's engagement with the social milieu conditioning the person's knowledge. Thus, our utilization of CDT makes both the cognitive and emotional facets of apprehension salient because the theory conceives of the different mindset stages holistically. This is consistent with our intention to theorize apprehension as a both cognitive and affective process.

CDT research indicates that mindset stages are distinct from personality variables (Strang & Kuhnert, 2009) and bear the imprint of people's various lifelong experiences. Mindset progression, according to Kegan, is an "epistemological change rather than merely a change in behavioral repertoire or an increase in the quantity or fund of knowledge" (2000: 48), because people at different mindset stages are differentially capable of reflecting on the limits of their knowledge and how it is shaped by their social context. At each mindset stage people are in a different relationship with their context in terms of how they process events and make meaning of them. The differences in mindset stages enable us to theorize the differences in the capacities to apprehend institutional contradictions, and the possibility of mindset stage progression enables us to acknowledge that the capacity for apprehending institutional contradictions may change over time.

There are six mindset stages, three of which are particularly relevant to adults and, thus, the focus of our research: the *socialized* mindset stage, the *self-authoring* mindset stage, and the *self-transforming* mindset stage (Drago-Severson, 2009; McCauley et al., 2006; Strang & Kuhnert, 2009). Research on the distribution of mindset stages among adult populations consistently places the overwhelming majority within and between these three stages (Kegan, 1994; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Rooke & Torbert, 2005; Torbert, 1987). Persons with a socialized mindset—*socialized knowers*—rely on those close to them and respected authorities as sources of validation of their own thoughts, feelings, and actions. Because they identify with and internalize the feelings of others, socialized knowers are not able to externalize the point of view of significant others as distinct from their own. In contrast, those with a self-authoring mindset—*self-authoring knowers*—are able to reflect on the interpersonal context as an object, take responsibility for their own feelings and judgments, and distinguish their own ideas from those of others. They derive esteem through meeting their obligations to do what they believe is right (Drago-Severson, 2004). Persons with a self-transforming mindset—*self-transforming knowers*—simultaneously engage with multiple and often competing value systems and maintain a dialectical relationship with these differences while seeking more inclusive perspectives that address or transcend them in a principled way (Kegan, 1982, 1994).

These three mindset stages describe distinct centers of grounding in a progressive developmental process, whereby each stage enables a person to reflect on personal and social phenomena that were unavailable for reflection at the previous stage. Although the capacity to reflect on the limits of one's knowledge is dramatically different at different mindset stages, the progression may unfold over the course of months or years, though we cannot necessarily assume that older people have progressed to a higher mindset stage (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). The progression may stop and resume. The transitional developmental process between the mindset stages is challenging and evolves from one side of the stage to the other, bridged through processes of self-reflection and inquiry that are often stifled by persons' defense mechanisms. A transition from the socialized mindset stage to the self-authoring mindset stage, for example, involves becoming less concerned about others confirming or disputing one's beliefs (Kegan, 2000). The transition begins with the current socialized mindset being dominant and the self-authoring mindset being more of a feeling or sense of awareness. With time, the two mindsets interact more, each impacting the other. As the transition progresses, self-authoring becomes dominant (Drago-Severson, 2004). Among professionals, the highest concentration of study respondents is either transitioning from socialized to self-authoring or functioning at the self-authoring mindset stage (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). The self-transforming mindset stage is very rare in these studies.

Because mindset stages represent more or less durable capacities to reflect on knowledge that is transferable across institutional spheres, CDT complements the focus of institutional analyses of the field-specific influences on social behavior (Child & Smith, 1987; Hinings & Greenwood, 1988; Kikulis, Slack, & Hinings, 1995). This conceptualization acknowledges more fully the sedimented (Creed et al., 2014) or "sticky" (Patriotta & Lanzara, 2006) effects of the various institutional arrangements that not only govern people's lives in specific institutional spheres (cf. Gladwell, 2005) but are internalized and retain their potency even when people are not directly exposed to them (Bourdieu, 2000; Kegan, 2000).

Situating mindset stages in an institutional context. Whereas CDT is useful in sensitizing researchers to the differences in people's capacities

to reflect on the limits of their knowledge and the emotional dynamics inherent in such a reflection, these dynamics are conceptualized in decidedly psychological and intrapersonal terms, and a greater sociological sensitivity is necessary in applying the theory to how institutional contradictions are apprehended.

According to CDT scholars, people at different mindset stages engage in different defensive routines that are intended to protect them against anxiety and stress, but the sources of anxiety and stress are mainly intrapersonal (e.g., fear of losing control for self-authoring knowers) or at most organizational (e.g., Kegan & Lahey, 2009) and do not acknowledge that institutions might thwart apprehension (Gramsci, 1971) because apprehension would potentially destabilize the institutional arrangements. CDT thus assumes blockages to apprehension as benign and intrapersonal rather than tied to maintaining the institutional status quo. In contrast, as Bourdieu argues, "Of all the forms of 'hidden persuasion', the most implacable is the one exerted, quite simply, by the *order of things*" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 168).

Thus, whereas we agree that blockages to apprehension are important, we argue that these blockages are not simply psychological defense mechanisms but also should be seen as located at the meso level connecting persons to institutional arrangements, thereby obscuring their capacity to recover the provisional and socially constructed nature of the institutional arrangements they take as a social fact. As we theorize below, these blockages manifest differently for persons at different mindset stages as different cognitive and emotional *investments* in various aspects of institutional arrangements that limit their apprehension of institutional contradictions. To the extent that such investments can be disrupted, at least temporarily (Emirbayer & Goldberg, 2005; Voronov & Vince, 2012), the capacity for apprehension increases.

MINDSET STAGES AND DIFFERENT CAPACITIES FOR APPREHENDING INSTITUTIONAL CONTRADICTIONS

We now theorize how different knowers (socialized, self-authoring, and self-transforming) vary in their capacity to apprehend institutional contradictions. Although we acknowledge that

mindset stages are not static, since people may evolve gradually from one mindset to the next and spend considerable time between mindset stages (Drago-Severson, 2004; Popp & Portnow, 2001), for analytic purposes we treat the three stages most common in adults as ideal types. This enables us to assess each mindset stage with respect to its contribution to the apprehension of institutional contradictions and propose conditions that either inhibit or enhance a particular knower's capacity to apprehend institutional contradictions.

We begin our assessment of each mindset stage with a summary of its key features as explicated by CDT scholars. Different knowers experience institutions differently, and we first differentiate among the mindset stages with respect to the characteristics of a knower's *investment in institutional arrangements*. We do not claim that any knower would be completely insensitive to the presence of institutional contradictions, and we then outline the baseline, or minimal, experiences of contradictions for each knower. Next we consider the nature of the *blockages to apprehension*, which refers to the manifestations of institutional control (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991; Gramsci, 1971) that naturalize "the order of things" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 168) for different knowers reducing their capacity to apprehend institutional contradictions. The last dimension we identify is the *facilitators of apprehension*, which refers to the conditions under which different knowers' capacity to apprehend institutional contradictions is elevated. Table 1 summarizes the arguments presented in this section.

How Socialized Knowers Apprehend Institutional Contradictions

Socialized knowers' sense of self and construction of reality depend on valued others. The term *valued others* (Drago-Severson, 2009) refers to the people with whom a knower has direct and ongoing relations of mutual dependence (e.g., family members) or authority figures (e.g., boss, pastor). These knowers' norms, values, emotional experiences, and reasoning have been "written by" the social context in which they are embedded (Kegan, 2000: 59). Thus, they are sensitive and malleable to the wills of their valued others.

Characteristics of investment in institutional arrangements. Socialized knowers unconsciously

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TABLE 1
Summary of How Different Knowers Experience and Apprehend Institutional Contradictions

	Mindset Stage		
	Socialized	**Self-Authoring**	**Self-Transforming**
Core features (based on Drago-Severson, 2004, 2009; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Kegan & Lahey, 2009)	• Reliant on valued others for sense of self • Malleable values that are subordinated to the values and desires of valued others • Threatened by conflict and strains to valued relations • Dominant operating mode: automatic and intuitive; avoiding conscious deliberation; mainly concrete	• Experience self as autonomous • Differentiate between own and others' values • Embrace conflict as opportunity for improved performance • Dominant operating mode: conscious deliberation; minimizing the role of intuition and emotion in decision making; abstract	• Experience self as negotiated and provisional • See others as dialogical partners in coconstructing a shared reality • Embrace conflict as opportunity for self-learning • Dominant operating mode: both conscious reflection and embracing of intuition and emotion; concrete and abstract
Characteristics of investment in institutional arrangements	Investment in concrete relations with valued others structured by extant institutional arrangements	Investment in desired identity conditioned by extant institutional arrangements	Investment in moral identity that transcends institutional arrangements
Baseline phenomenological experience of contradictions	Raw affective sensation that something is wrong	Cognitive awareness of presence of alternative institutional goals prompts dissonance	An affective and cognitive trigger of self- and other-reflection
Blockages of apprehension	Valued others defending the institutional status quo	Experiencing contradictions as a challenge to desired identity trigger rationalizations	Position limiting exposure to institutional contradictions and making it difficult to relate to those impacted by them
Facilitators of apprehension	Valued others highlighting contradictions and linking them to knower's suffering	Experiences that overpower the ability to rationalize institutional contradictions	Increased emotional connection with people impacted by institutional contradictions

identify with and subordinate their own needs to the wishes and wants of others (Drago-Severson, 2004). They need "a clear sense of what others expect and want" from them and feel "a strong obligation and duty to meet those expectations" (Popp & Portnow, 2001: 60) so as to feel liked by others and, hence, to value themselves. Thus, they are invested *not* in particular institutional goals per se but, rather, in their relationships with valued others that are structured by these institutional arrangements, and their values and knowledge are derived from these relationships. This means these knowers' experience of institutions is filtered through the eyes of and mediated by their valued others rather than through their own direct experience with or reflection on the institutional arrangements. Their investment in these valued relations is primarily affective and unconscious, and their capacity to make sense of their institutional milieu depends primarily on the cues of valued others (e.g., Weber & Glynn, 2006). Although socialized knowers are capable of conscious reflection, broad and abstract institutional categories like class, gender, and race are relatively meaningless to them since they are more likely to be preoccupied with managing specific and concrete valued relations.

Baseline experience of contradictions. For socialized knowers, the experience of institutional contradictions is likely to be limited to raw, unprocessed affective sensations that something is wrong. Cognitive deliberation on the causes of the discomfort is unlikely.

Blockages of apprehension. Whereas CDT scholars conceptualize the self-subordination to valued others on the part of socialized knowers as a psychological phenomenon of people being driven by a desire to belong and be liked (Kegan & Lahey, 2009), we argue that, in the context of institutions, this desire to belong also enables these knowers to submit to institutional arrangements. Socialized knowers are motivated by a desire to be reassured that their beliefs conform to those of their valued others. This functions as a blockage to cognitive apprehension of institutional contradictions, whereby socialized knowers are not likely to reflect on institutional goals.

The threat of being shunned or rejected by valued others, which is a general human preoccupation (Creed et al., 2014; Scheff, 1988; Thoits, 2004), is especially threatening to socialized knowers' sense of self. Accordingly, to the extent that people at this mindset stage experience interpersonal strain resulting from institutional contradictions, they are likely to experience the dissonance between the latent sensation that something is wrong and their valued others' defense of the status quo. Various automatic defense mechanisms are likely to reduce the stress and discomfort resulting from the exposure to the contradictions while precluding either affective or cognitive apprehension.

In particular, socialized knowers are likely to focus on repairing those interpersonal breaches they experience as being threatened. This might involve self-directed attempts to supress or hide—even from themselves—aspects of themselves that might be scorned by valued others (Creed et al., 2010; Scheff, 1988), as in the case of gay ministers who attempt to repress and deny their homosexuality and "pass" as straight. Other defenses against such dissonance might include rejection and stigmatization of the conflicting institutional prescriptions or people identified with them (Petriglieri & Stein, 2012; Vince & Mazen, 2014). For example, upon encountering initiatives to legalize gay marriage, a socialized knower influenced by his/her pastor might experience the challenge to the extant institutional arrangements as a threat to his/her own marriage.

When exposure to institutional contradictions is especially prolonged, resulting in more protracted emotional discomfort, socialized knowers are likely to acknowledge the presence of alternative institutional norms—that is, to apprehend the institutional contradictions cognitively. However, to the extent that valued others defend extant institutional arrangements, socialized knowers are unlikely to gain sufficient emotional distance from the extant institutional norms to be able to either genuinely reflect on or experiment with the validity of alternative institutional norms. In other words, the inhibition of affective apprehension by valued others is likely to limit cognitive apprehension as well.

Based on the above, we propose the following.

> *Proposition 1a: The capacity of a socialized knower to apprehend institutional contradictions is decreased to the extent that valued others defend the institutional status quo.*

Facilitators of apprehension. In spite of socialized knowers' overall low capacity for apprehending institutional contradictions, the visceral experience of institutional contradictions as painful, even if short-lived, increases their receptivity to the influence of valued others who can amplify this minimal detection of institutional contradictions and make it possible for the socialized knowers to loosen their attachment to the institutional status quo. The charisma of respected authority figures (Andreas, 2007), intimate ties to peers (Goodwin, 1997), or the threat of social dislocation from valued others (Creed et al., 2014) who question the institutional status quo are likely to make institutional contradictions particularly painful for socialized knowers, who look to valued others to help them define the nature of the contradiction and how it should be resolved. For example, Goodwin and Pfaff (2001) observed that people may enroll and remain involved in high-risk social movements not only because of their own deep desire to transform institutional arrangements but also because they desire to belong to a valued social group that has the ability to grant intimacy or threaten shame (Creed et al., 2014; Goodwin, 1997). We suggest that these arguments will be most applicable to socialized knowers.

As noted above, socialized knowers' capacity for cognitive apprehension is limited. However, their affective apprehension can be increased by valued others who apprehend institutional contradictions. The experience of personal suffering is a necessary but insufficient condition for elevating socialized knowers' capacity for apprehension, since they also require the guidance of valued others who have the ability to grant intimacy or shun them (Auster & Ruebottom, 2013; Driver, 2013) to link the experienced suffering to the institutional contradictions.

Based on the above, we propose the following.

> *Proposition 1b: The capacity of a socialized knower to apprehend institutional contradictions is increased to the extent that valued others highlight these contradictions and link them to the knower's experienced suffering.*

How Self-Authoring Knowers Apprehend Institutional Contradictions

Self-authoring knowers have developed a sense of their own authority (Popp & Portnow, 2001) and a capacity for making conscious and deliberate choices between the expectations of others according to their own beliefs (Drago-Severson, 2009; Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987). These knowers experience others as autonomous beings with distinct values and agendas that may differ from their own, and they treat alternative positions as one frame of reference among many. They are comfortable with conflict (Popp & Portnow, 2001) and view it as potentially constructive. As Drago-Severson explains, "They can construct a theory about their relationships and have an understanding of how the past, present, and future relate. They generate their own systems of values and standards and can identify with abstract values, principles, and longer-term purposes" (2009: 47). Thus, self-authoring knowers are comfortable with conscious reflection, and this is their preferred mode of operation, so much so that they often experience emotional engagement with problems and challenges that make them feel less in control as threatening (Kegan & Lahey, 2009).

Characteristics of investment in institutional arrangements. Self-authoring knowers' targets of investment are the institutional goals themselves, which they internalize and treat as their own desires and wishes. Attaining the self-authoring mindset stage happens not in isolation but in the context of a particular institution that emphasizes the development of an internalized capacity to desire certain things and to exercise discretionary judgment that is informed by its values. Because institutions "exercise pressures on component individuals to weaken their ties, or not to form any ties with other institutions or persons that might make claims that conflict with their own demands" (Coser, 1974: 6), they draw clear symbolic boundaries between those who belong and those who do not, and they block competing sources of allegiance and identification. This involves developing an idealized desired identity that a person seeks to gain and maintain (Anteby, 2008; Carr, 1998; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010) and against which the person assesses his/her thoughts, feelings, and actions (Ibarra, 1999). This is implicit in Barker's study of concertive control tracking how, over time, members of self-managing teams invested their "human dignity" (1993: 427) in the institutional arrangements that controlled their own and others' work. Other examples can be found in studies of culture management initiatives (e.g., Willmott, 1993) and hobbies (e.g., Puddephatt, 2008) underscoring that a key mode of institutional control involves the development of a subjectivity that willingly subjugates itself to particular institutional arrangements by desiring a particular identity experienced as one's own and freely chosen. The investment in the desired identity is both affective and cognitive, since self-authoring knowers develop both idealized images of themselves as particular kinds of institutional actors and a coherent narrative that crystalizes the norms that guide their actions (Fraher & Gabriel, 2014; Ibarra, 1999; Thornborrow & Brown, 2009).

As noted earlier, most people navigate multiple institutional spheres (e.g., work and family) governed by different logics, and it is important to acknowledge that different self-authoring knowers might prioritize different institutional spheres differently. For example, one self-authoring knower might identify with her religion more than her profession, and it might be the reverse for another person. Some institutional orders are "greedier" (Coser, 1974) than others and dominate a person's life more strongly. Thus, self-authoring knowers' desired identities are more likely aligned with one institutional sphere than with another. Yet the desired identity is likely to be more sticky

(Patriotta & Lanzara, 2006) such that the knower's investment in it is likely to transcend beyond an institutional sphere in which the desired identity is rooted. Thus, the desired identity of a partner in a major accounting firm (Covaleski et al., 1998) is likely to transcend his work life and carry over into his family life and other nonwork domains. Conversely, the desired identity of "dutiful wife and nurturing mother" (Leung, Zietsma, & Peredo, 2014) can shape the way one engages in business ventures outside the home.

Baseline experience of contradictions. Self-authoring knowers' highly developed capacity to analyze phenomena in relation to the institutional goals they have internalized as their personal values and desires means that they are likely to be able to identify the presence of an alternate institutional goal and acknowledge it consciously—that is, apprehend institutional contradictions cognitively.

Blockages of apprehension. CDT scholars see self-authoring knowers as having a greater capacity for leadership and change management (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987; Strang & Kuhnert, 2009; Valcea, Hamdani, Buckley, & Novicevic, 2011). We agree that self-authoring knowers would be more likely to *act* as institutional change agents than socialized knowers *if* they apprehended institutional contradictions deeply. However, with respect to *apprehending* institutional contradictions, the focus of our analysis, we expect self-authoring knowers to have considerable difficulty. While able to rely on their own deeply held values to deliberate the means for attaining institutional goals, they are less likely to reflect critically on the institutional goals they have internalized in their desired identities.

Thus, upon exposure to alternative institutional goals challenging those tied to the knowers' desired identity, cognitive apprehension is likely. However, cognitive apprehension is likely to trigger dissonance because of the continued emotional investment in the institutional goals tied to the desired identity. The knowers' highly developed capacity for reasoning and problem solving is expected to act as a form of dissonance reduction (Festinger, 1957), whereby the knowers generate a narrative that rationalizes their continued emotional investment in particular institutional goals and minimizes the experience of the institutional contradiction.

As a result, self-authoring knowers are likely to rationalize this continued emotional investment,

with the result that the institutionally structured desired identities act as constraints on apprehension, preventing these knowers from experiencing the institutional arrangements to which these desired identities are tied as provisional. For example, in Ibarra's study one respondent illustrated the questioning of the institutional norm of consulting work that conflicted with institutional norms internalized in prior professional and educational experiences as follows:

> In terms of my development, I have a huge hurdle in transitioning from seeing myself as 'the one who knows all the facts' to being an advisor to the client. It's like my whole basis for existence is cut away if I can't rely on having read more than everyone else, having looked at the analysis and understood all the points of view (1999: 780).

Based on the above, we propose the following.

> *Proposition 2a: The capacity of a self-authoring knower to apprehend institutional contradictions is reduced to the extent that the alternative institutional goals challenge the ones tied to the knower's desired identity.*

Facilitators of apprehension. Given self-authoring knowers' tendency to reduce the personal discomfort they experience from exposure to institutional contradictions by intellectualizing the experience and reducing its emotional potency, more visceral and personal exposure to institutional contradictions is likely to deliver an emotional impact that is difficult to intellectualize and to amplify the knowers' experience of institutional contradictions, elevating their capacity to apprehend them. For example, bodily experiences of institutional contradictions are especially difficult to rationalize and, as such, are more likely to lead to increased capacity for apprehension of the contradictions. In Michel's (2011) study of investment bankers, for instance, many participants' behavior was consistent with the self-authoring mindset stage in that these participants had strongly internalized and were guided and controlled by the desired identity inculcated in them by the profession and the organization. It is apparent that some bankers apprehended the contradictions between their own and the organization's needs through the very visceral experience of developing health problems due to the strenuous work lifestyle. For example, one

banker was quoted as saying, "Once my body forced me to work and live differently, I can see choices where I have not seen them before" (Michel, 2011: 342).

Making the exposure to institutional contradictions more personal and visceral can also take place in the context of protected spaces, where people who are invested in different institutional arrangements can interact less formally. There they can deconstruct conflicting and abstract institutional norms into more specific practices (e.g., Besharov, 2014), and they can get to know each other on a personal level, transcending the confines of specific institutional roles (DiBenigno & Kellogg, 2014; Gray, Purdy, & Ansari, 2015). These protected spaces can involve occasional workshops (Mair & Hehenberger, 2014), long-term working groups (Yorks, Neuman, Kowalski, & Kowalski, 2007), or informal, non-work-related clubs (Furnari, 2014). Their key function is to force participants to transcend purely intellectual engagements with proponents of rival institutional arrangements and make interactions more personal and emotionally significant.

Based on the preceding, we propose the following.

> *Proposition 2b: The capacity of a self-authoring knower to apprehend institutional contradictions is increased to the extent to which the exposure to the contradictions overrides the knower's ability to rationalize the experience.*

How Self-Transforming Knowers Apprehend Institutional Contradictions

Self-transforming knowers take their "unique identity itself as an object of reflection," experiencing "multiple possibilities of the self as a product of interaction with others" (McCauley et al., 2006: 638). They are able to engage in what Lawrence and Maitlis (2012) call the "ethic of care," which involves seeing others as relational rather than independent and bounded actors. In this ongoing practice of care, self-transforming knowers conceive of truth as local and provisional, recognize the ubiquity of vulnerability, and value the growth of an uncertain future (McCauley et al., 2006) that is coconstructed jointly with willing partners in the course of collective inquiry. Conflict is seen as inevitable and an opportunity for the development of self and others.

Self-transforming knowers are akin to Mannheim's (1985) free-floating intellectuals, whose subjectivities are less constituted by extant institutional arrangements and their positions in the arrangements, which allows them to adopt a more skeptical orientation toward the institutional arrangements they encounter. Similar to the notion of the free-floating intellectual, this mindset stage is acknowledged by CDT scholars as the most difficult to attain and, accordingly, the most rare among the adults in their studies (Kegan, 1994; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Rooke & Torbert, 2005; Strang & Kuhnert, 2009; Torbert, 1987). This is the only stage explicitly encompassing people's reflections on their relationship to the institutional spheres in which they are active and on the process of "self-authorship" and "self-formation" (Kegan, 1994) itself. Furthermore, unlike self-authoring knowers, who avoid emotional engagement with contradictions, preferring instead to deliberate consciously, self-transforming knowers are more comfortable with using intuition and emotions to help them explore the tensions and challenges brought to the fore by their experience of institutional contradictions.

Characteristics of investment in institutional arrangements. Moral identity, which refers to the preoccupation with seeing oneself as a moral person (Blasi, 1984; O'Reilly & Aquino, 2011; Stets & Carter, 2012), is expected to be a particularly important preoccupation for self-transforming knowers, and the moral identities in which they invest may transcend or draw flexibly from a variety of institutional logics, since these knowers are especially concerned about how they impact the world around them (Kegan, 1994) and with the pursuit of the common good (Drago-Severson, 2009). This is apparent in Besharov's (2014) study of a natural supermarket, wherein a few managers were able to help employees transcend the conflict between community and market logics by "removing ideology" from the day-to-day practices of operating the organization, reducing the salience of boundaries, and facilitating mutual identification among employees. The nature of this investment in maintaining a moral identity is both cognitive and affective.[4] Being

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[4] We do not suggest that moral identity is unimportant for socialized or self-authoring knowers but, rather, that its relative importance and salience are greater for self-transforming knowers.

able to engage emotionally with people who inhabit or are impacted by particular institutional arrangements provides self-transforming knowers with dialogical partners for calibrating their moral identities (see also Drago-Severson, 2009).

Baseline experience of contradictions. This stage is most conducive to apprehending institutional contradictions because self-transforming knowers' sense of self is least conditioned by particular institutional arrangements, and they are prone to seeing all institutional arrangements as potentially arbitrary social constructions (e.g., Gergen, 1997). Thus, in the presence of direct exposure to institutional contradictions, the knower tends to experience them as triggers for self-reflection.

Blockages of apprehension. Self-transforming knowers' apprehension may be limited to the extent that their position limits exposure to institutional contradictions. As a result, institutional arrangements are experienced as too distant, intellectual, and abstract. Accordingly, in situations that do not enable a self-transforming knower to relate emotionally to those inhabiting or those impacted differently by the institutional arrangements, self-transforming knowers are likely to be limited in their ability to apprehend institutional contradictions either affectively or cognitively.

For example, Khan, Munir, and Willmott's (2007) study of the introduction of new institutional arrangements in the soccer ball manufacturing industry aimed at eliminating child labor from Pakistani factories shows that, to the surprise of the foreign activists, many intended beneficiaries resented the change. Child laborers felt the work provided them with a sense of dignity and solidarity with the other household members who had to work hard to make ends meet. The reform also resulted in female soccer ball stitchers having to do the work outside their homes, when they would rather not be seen publicly as stitchers because of the occupation's low status. While we are not suggesting that all or most anti-child-labor activists were self-transforming knowers, this study illustrates how someone's commitment to attaining moral ends (something that would be especially pronounced for self-transforming knowers), coupled with an inability to relate to the experiences of people inhabiting the institutional arrangements and impacted by the contradictions, can blind the knower to the institutional contradictions. Another example from the domain of academic hiring might involve senior faculty not recognizing that the institutional template used to scout and recruit academics might be implicitly constructed in a manner that favors male candidates (Brink & Benschop, 2014). In these and other situations where a self-transforming knower's exposure either to the contradictions or to the people experiencing them is lacking, their capacity to apprehend them is limited.

Based on the above, we propose the following.

> *Proposition 3a: The capacity of a self-transforming knower to apprehend institutional contradictions is decreased to the extent to which the knower's position limits his or her exposure to the institutional contradictions, rendering the knower unable to relate to the experiences of the people impacted by the institutional contradictions.*

Facilitators of apprehension. It is important to emphasize that the fact that the highlighting of institutional contradictions for self-transforming knowers does not trigger defense mechanisms, as it does for socialized and self-transforming knowers, means that their overall capacity to apprehend institutional contradictions is much greater overall. Because, as noted above, self-transforming knowers are especially preoccupied with maintaining personal integrity and moral identity (Blasi, 1984), to the extent that a particular institutional contradiction can be linked to a self-transforming knower's sense of right and wrong while also bridging the differences between the knower's experiences and those of the people impacted more directly by the institutional contradictions. For example, the injustice frames (Benford & Snow, 2000) or moral shocks (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995; Scheff, 2006) and other narrative and storytelling techniques that social movement researchers have identified as key to moving people from apathy to active support of various causes are likely to be especially effective for amplifying self-transforming knowers' experience of institutional contradictions. This happens because they can facilitate these knowers' emotional identification with those who are more directly impacted by the institutional contradictions while activating the knowers' moral identity.

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Because this mindset stage is quite difficult to reach for most people (Drago-Severson, 2004, 2009), illustrations are difficult to find. One instance might be inferred from Young's (2001) study of the movement for immediate emancipation of slaves that spread among evangelicals in the northern United States in the 1830s. For most of these people, slavery was relatively remote, given that the institution was confined to the South by that time. Nonetheless, the activists came to see the immediate (as opposed to piecemeal) abolition of slavery as a personal moral imperative, and this sentiment was spread through the stories casting slavery as evil and highlighting the humanity and plight of the slaves. Although we do not imply that most of the activists were self-transforming knowers, we suggest that the mechanisms highlighted in the study—vivid and dramatic stories provoking moral outrage and humanizing people directly impacted by the institutional contradictions—can be expected to be especially effective in increasing the capacity for apprehension among self-transforming knowers.

Based on the preceding, we propose the following.

> *Proposition 3b: The capacity of a self-transforming knower to apprehend institutional contradictions is increased to the extent to which their ability to relate to the experiences of those impacted by the institutional contradictions is increased and the contradictions are linked to the knower's moral identity.*

DISCUSSION

One of the most significant recent advances in institutional analysis is the argument that institutional contradictions lead people to question the necessity and inevitability of extant institutional arrangements, thus opening up opportunities for institutional change and institutional entrepreneurship (Seo & Creed, 2002). However, scholars have paid little attention to whether institutional contradictions are apprehended, which is necessary to facilitate changes in people's orientation toward institutional arrangements that might lead to changes in those arrangements (Bourdieu, 2000; Glynos et al., 2012; Mutch, 2007; Voronov & Vince, 2012). In response,

we have sought to theorize the differences in people's capacities to apprehend institutional contradictions that might potentially evolve over time in response to various life experiences.

We argued that the commonly postulated relationship between institutional contradictions and institutional instability—that, in the presence of institutional contradictions, people are likely to initiate institutional change—is likely to hold for self-transforming knowers, who have a dialogical conception of themselves and others that makes them more amenable to reexamining the optimality of institutional arrangements. Nonetheless, we argued that even these knowers may at times fail to apprehend institutional contradictions, especially when they are removed from the contradictions or the people who are directly impacted by them. In contrast, socialized knowers will likely struggle to apprehend institutional contradictions since they tend to experience them as threats to the valued interpersonal relationships that give their lives meaning. Although these knowers are unlikely to apprehend institutional contradictions deeply enough to initiate institutional change, they are likely to be responsive to influence from valued social groups or authority figures who may wish to influence them. Self-authoring knowers will likely struggle to apprehend institutional contradictions owing to their tendency to internalize the institutional arrangements that govern their lives by becoming incorporated into their desired identities that guide their feelings, thoughts, and actions. However, a more personal and visceral experience of institutional contradictions that overrides such knowers' ability to rationalize them can increase their capacity to apprehend institutional contradictions.

Not only do the above arguments provide nuance to the widely held assumption in institutional theory that institutional contradictions trigger agency, but they also place CDT insights in a broader and more sociologically sensitive context. Thus, we argued that the capacity to apprehend institutional contradictions does not progress in a linear manner, mirroring the mindset progression expected by CDT scholars (e.g., Drago-Severson, 2009; Kegan, 1982, 1994). Rather, the capacities differ, and different triggers might be needed for different knowers to apprehend institutional contradictions deeply enough to engage in institutional change efforts. We now discuss the implications of our work for the study of embedded agency, inhabited institutions, and strategic change.

Contribution to the Study of Embedded Agency

The issue of embedded agency has been an ongoing preoccupation for institutional scholars (Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009; Seo & Creed, 2002; Thornton et al., 2012). Although advances have been made, the conceptualization of agency as resulting primarily in response to institutional contradictions (e.g., Seo & Creed, 2002) arguably "sidesteps" rather than resolves the embedded agency problem (Mutch, 2007; Willmott, 2011). This conceptualization does not acknowledge that there are different ways for people to engage with institutions, regardless of contradictions (Lok, 2007; Lok & De Rond, 2013). Furthermore, researchers have puzzled over why the presence of institutional contradictions does not always lead to mobilization and why people might mobilize in the absence of salient contradictions (Emirbayer & Goldberg, 2005; Voronov & Vince, 2012).

Our argument is that people's mindset stages make them more or less likely to apprehend institutional contradictions under different circumstances. Thus, people at different mindset stages tend to invest in institutional arrangements in different ways (e.g., investing in particular relations, in institutionally conditioned desired identities, or in a sense of mutuality that transcends particular institutions) and are more susceptible to different conditions that weaken these investments.

A key contribution of our work is to help explain why instances of institutional change and institutional entrepreneurship are relatively rare and to highlight the resulting need to study the processes of apprehending and acting on institutional contradictions. As Mutch (2007) and Lawrence, Leca, and Zilber (2013) have argued, institutional scholars have tended to sample on the dependent variable by working backward from successful institutional change instances. In actuality, even dramatic institutional contradictions (e.g., those brought to the fore by the Great Financial Crisis) often fail to be apprehended by many as something that either requires institutional change or creates opportunities for such change (Davis, 2009; Glynos et al., 2012), while others mobilize to instigate change even in the absence of salient contradictions (Emirbayer & Goldberg, 2005).

This underscores the importance of developing a greater sensitivity to people's lived experiences of institutions and institutional contradictions, and tracking in situ their responses to institutional contradictions. We also encourage significantly more interpretive and phenomenological research utilizing ethnographies and case studies. These studies should focus on the experiences of people embedded in institutions and organizations currently undergoing the consequences of contradictions, such as emergent inconsistencies in deeply held values or missed opportunities for reform due to conformity to norms, and could be rich sources of data relevant to the model presented in this article. Kellogg (2009), Creed et al. (2010) and Hallett (2010), among others, have demonstrated the utility of these approaches for advancing a better understanding of how people experience institutional contradictions.

Another fruitful research direction might be to utilize experimental methods advocated by some institutional scholars (e.g., Bitektine, 2011; Bitektine & Haack, 2015) to simulate institutional contradictions and assess how persons located at different mindset stages might act in response to these simulated contradictions. Caution must be used in interpreting results of experimental research, however, since laboratory settings typically present research participants with contrived social situations that lack external validity. Thus, alternatively, field experiments (e.g., Cable, Gino, & Staats, 2013) can also offer opportunities to study people's responses to institutional contradiction with a great deal of precision, while retaining more realism than what is possible in a laboratory.

With respect to specific elicitation techniques that might be needed to assess people's mindset stages and their possible changes over time in field studies, phenomenologically oriented interviews (Moustakas, 1994; Seidman, 2006) offer much promise. These involve exploring, first, the story line of persons' experiences and, second, how they describe their felt experiences of the points in their story line, particularly probing the triggers and responses comprising these points. Such interviews can produce data foundational for mapping persons' epistemological relationship to the contradictions. After constructing the descriptive story line, the interviews would be analyzed in terms of how the participants describe the episodes triggering their apprehension of contradictions and ensuing responses, and what forms the triggers take. The descriptive stories could be triangulated to the extent possible by archival documents of the events.

Further, although our focus has been on theorizing the apprehension of institutional contradictions in the context of triggering institutional change (the most common context for treating the issue of institutional contradictions in prior research), our framework can also contribute to recent research on institutional complexity (Greenwood et al., 2011) that deviates from the assumption that institutional contradictions are fleeting and short-term occurrences triggering institutional change (McPherson & Sauder, 2013; Pache & Santos, 2013b). The focus of this perspective has been on understanding the ways actors might be able to manage and respond to the conflicting institutional pressures resulting from the presence of multiple logics in the field on an ongoing basis (Goodrick & Reay, 2011; Pache & Santos, 2010). Some scholars have argued that although institutional complexity might create short-term challenges, it might also offer organizations and fields longer-term benefits (Helms, Oliver, & Webb, 2012; Kraatz & Block, 2008; Pache & Santos, 2013b; Sharma & Good, 2013).

Apprehending institutional contradictions is important for managing institutional complexity on an ongoing basis. For example, while it might be possible to set up organizational structures that segregate divergent institutional pressures to some extent, there are likely to be persons who must navigate and interface across the parts of an organization where different institutional pressures are more dominant or salient (McPherson & Sauder, 2013; Pache & Santos, 2013a,b; Smets & Jarzabkowski, 2013; Voronov, De Clercq, & Hinings, 2013). Failure to apprehend institutional contradictions under such circumstances would hinder an organization's ability to effectively respond to the pluralistic demands imposed on it. Thus, in her study of a natural foods supermarket, Besharov (2014) identifies "idealists" (employees passionate about and wholly committed to the market's social mission) and "capitalists" (employees committed to the pursuit of profit). These, we argue, correspond to self-authoring knowers whose desired identities are tied to either community or market logic, respectively, and both idealists and capitalists in the study had considerable difficulty apprehending the logic that conflicted with the one tied to their respective desired identities.

Based on the arguments presented above, we expect self-transforming knowers to be best equipped to take on these ambidextrous roles of apprehending rival logics and functioning across

them on an ongoing basis. However, given the difficulty that most people have in reaching this mindset stage and the resulting rarity of self-transforming knowers, it is important to examine the conditions under which self-authoring or socialized knowers might be able to apprehend . complexity. For example, we expect self-authoring knowers to operate effectively in situations where, despite complexity, the different logics might be ordered hierarchically, such as the dominance of market over editorial logic in the publishing industry (Thornton, 2002). This would enable self-authoring knowers to align themselves more closely with one logic over another. Socialized knowers might function more effectively in the context of cross-logic workgroups that offer them strong guidance from valued others (e.g., respected managers) and incorporate elements from multiple logics.

Contribution to the Study of Inhabited Institutionalism

Neoinstitutional scholars have increasingly been criticized for failing to provide an inhabited view of institutions (Barley, 2008; Hallett & Ventresca, 2006; Willmott, 2011). Examining the micropractices and processes through which institutions are created, maintained, or disrupted without unpacking how people become particular kinds of institutional actors provides us with a truncated understanding of the institutional work performed. In order to understand why people perform some forms of institutional work and not others, we need to understand how people experience the institutional arrangements (Suddaby, 2010) that not only shape the resources available to them but also make their lives meaningful (Friedland, 2009) and prime how they think and feel (Weber & Glynn, 2006). Attending to the meaning-making mindset stages and how they influence the way people experience institutions requires researchers to pay closer attention to the complete human being, including his/her biography, thoughts, and feelings (Creed et al., 2014; Willmott, 2011), as opposed to a disembodied, reified, and emotionless "actor."

An interesting research direction along these lines might involve investigating how a person's biography (including various personal and educational experiences) might contribute to her or his transition to a particular mindset stage. Institutional contradictions might not only be

apprehended differently by persons located at different mindset stages but also may act as triggers that initiate mindset transitions. Because our interest was in understanding the impact of mindset stages on the apprehension of institutional contradictions, we have not explored this converse relationship in detail. However, research by Mutch (2007), for example, has demonstrated the utility of studying people's biographies in order to understand their propensity to engage in institutional entrepreneurship; this suggests that institutional scholars could glean further important insights about how institutions are inhabited by studying life stories. A specific focus might be to identify the types of institutional contradictions that prompt mindset transitions and the extent to which contradictions might interact with other facets of people's biographies, such as educational experiences, social class, race, gender, and so on. Whereas research has documented how these factors influence life trajectories (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977), a better understanding of how biographical factors influence persons' propensity to transition through mindset stages, and thereby alter their capacity for apprehending institutional contradictions, would be valuable.

From the point of view of inhabited institutionalism, persons do not simply become particular kinds of actors; thus, another interesting direction would involve examining the role of childhood experiences in priming persons' later capacity to apprehend institutional contradictions and more general orientations toward various institutions. Childhood experiences have been largely neglected by sociologists (Pugh, 2014) and organizational scholars, although some research points to them as key antecedents of durable inequalities in societies (e.g., Calarco, 2014; Froyum, 2010; Reay, 1998). CDT's recognition that people's capacity to reflect on the limits of their knowledge can help researchers become more sensitive to the lifelong experiences that people have in a variety of spheres and that affect how they become particular kinds of actors.

Contribution to the Study of Strategic Change

We think the arguments presented above offer important implications beyond institutional theory. Scholars of strategic change have acknowledged how important it is for key actors, such as managers, to be able to distance themselves from their taken-for-granted social worlds in order to gain a novel perspective on the nature of their

organization and environment. For example, one of Hamel's influential insights is that "perspective is worth 50 IQ points" (1996: 79). Central to gaining "perspective" is recognizing the need for revolutionary change. In fact, a common theme running through much of the strategic management literature is the need to abandon the organizational status quo in order to respond effectively to changes in the environment. The importance of gaining perspective and questioning what one knows has likely increased, as organizations face newly complex, hypercompetitive, and hyperconnected environments that demand flexibility and constant innovation (Sargut & McGrath, 2011; Zammuto, Griffith, Majchrzak, Dougherty, & Faraj, 2007).

However, systematic research into the differential capacities to question the social world that people take for granted and that makes their lives meaningful has been lacking. Researchers have tended to examine organizational (Bettis & Prahalad, 1995; Lechner & Floyd, 2012) and psychological (Hodgkinson & Healey, 2011) explanations of people's ability to question the status quo and have assigned the responsibility for pursuing it primarily to individual managers. For example, Hamel (1996, 1998) placed a great deal of emphasis on facilitating new conversations, unleashing passions, and discovering and encouraging the revolutionaries in a company's midst. Elsewhere, Argyris and Schön's (1978) classic research identified psychological defensive routines as key inhibitors of organizational learning and tasked managers with setting up processes that can overcome them.

Much of this research does not attend to the extraorganizational institutional forces that might render some (or even most) people unable to reflect on the organizational or industry status quo (Contu & Willmott, 2003; Reynolds, 1998). The study of people's capacity to apprehend institutional contradictions can enrich research in areas of strategic management, leadership, and organizational learning, among others. Our argument points to the need to be more sensitive to the broader sociological factors that can either facilitate or hinder the development of perspective required for strategists by imprinting themselves on people's minds in a very profound way that is not easily perceptible (e.g., Yanow & Tsoukas, 2009).

Scope Conditions

The first scope condition of our framework is that, given the relative abundance of research on

how actors respond to institutional contradictions and the dearth of research on the apprehending of these contradictions, we focused on theorizing apprehension rather than on how people move from apprehending institutional contradictions to taking action. We made this distinction for analytic purposes in order to enable us to theorize the differential capacities for apprehending institutional contradictions with sufficient depth. Empirical research is needed to integrate research on apprehending institutional contradictions with that on taking action, and we acknowledge that, in actuality, the boundaries are somewhat blurry since apprehending institutional contradictions could coincide with taking action.

Second, given that contradictions around goals are especially contentious and difficult to manage for both people and organizations (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Besharov, 2014; Besharov & Smith, 2014; Creed et al., 2010), these contradictions are particularly well suited for theorizing people's capacity for apprehension. We recognize that institutional logics have their own internal contradictions (Greenwood et al., 2011; Sewell, 1997), and it would be valuable to examine the extent to which different knowers experience such internal contradictions.

Finally, it is beyond the scope of this article to theorize how mindset progression might unfold over a person's life, since our primary interest is in theorizing the differences in the capacity to apprehend institutional contradictions. CDT scholars' treatment of mindset transitions conceives of the progression as unambiguously good. In addition, CDT offers an undersocialized model of the person who can be separated from his or her institutional environment relatively easily and does not consider how various lifelong experiences in various institutions might be sedimented within a person's self (Creed et al., 2014; Patriotta & Lanzara, 2006). As a result, although CDT scholars acknowledge that mindset progression is a potentially lifelong process, most of the guidance they offer with respect to facilitating transformation from one meaning-making stage to another places the onus on the learners themselves, or on task leaders helping their followers transform (e.g., Baron & Cayer, 2011; Drago-Severson, 2004, 2009; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Valcea et al., 2011). We expect that not only do different knowers apprehend institutional contradictions differently but that, under some circumstances, the exposure to institutional contradictions can also trigger a mindset progression beyond a person's current stage; thus, the link between experiencing institutional contradictions and mindset stage progression deserves empirical examination.

CONCLUSION

The notion of institutional contradictions has been fundamental to the understanding of institutional instability and change. However, little is known about how institutional contradictions are experienced (Creed et al., 2010; Suddaby, 2010), and there is an unexamined possibility that they might not be apprehended as triggers of or opportunities for creative action (Voronov & Vince, 2012). Our objective in this article has been to theorize the differences in persons' capacities to apprehend institutional contradictions. More broadly, our work helps extend the emerging inhabited institutionalism perspective (Barley, 2008; Bechky, 2011; Hallett & Ventresca, 2006). We argue that continued advances in understanding institutional reproduction and change require placing persons—including their thoughts, feelings, life experiences, and aspirations—into the analyses of institutional processes.

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AUTHOR QUERIES

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