IN AND OUT:
MOVEMENTS INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL TO ORGANIZATIONS, AND THE ADOPTION OF SAME-SEX PARTNER HEALTH BENEFITS BY CORPORATIONS

Our analysis of the adoption of same-sex partner health benefits by Fortune 500 corporations, 1990-2003 shows that a corporation’s gay and lesbian employee resource group (ERG), organization of GLBT advocacy organizations, and framing activities in organizational fields exerted great influence on the rate of benefits adoption by the corporation.

In past decades, institutional theorists have long argued that institutions are powerful forces that greatly influence organizational behaviors and outcomes (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). The broader cognitive, normative, and regulatory forces stemming from dominant institutions shape the stability and persistence of organizational models and practices aligned with the institutions (e.g., Scott, 2003). Not until the past few years have studies begun to shift the focus from how organizational models and practices persist to how new models and practices emerge and gradually lead to (de) institutionalization of the dominant and new institutions (see Dacin, et al., 2002; Greenwood, et al., 2008 for recent reviews). However, much of the attention rests upon how changes in the configuration of organizational fields and the efforts devoted by powerful actors in the fields lead to institutional change, such as changes in social and political environments (e.g., Oliver, 1992; Haveman and Rao, 1997), the theorization efforts of new models put forward by professional associations and media (e.g., Greenwood, et al., 2002; Sine et al., 2007), and managerial experiences with the new practices (e.g., Sanders and Tuschke, 2007). Yet, little attention has been devoted to exploring the role of collective action initiated by marginalized or institutional disadvantageous actors potentially leading to institutional change. This is surprising because there are often multiple institutions in organizational fields and they can create conflict and contradiction (Friedland and Alford, 1991; Seo and Creed, 2002). Such conflict and contradiction can trigger political struggles between proponents and opponents of dominant and new institutions, which can, in turn, lead to institutional change.

To better appreciate how political struggles among actors in organizations and organizational fields have impact on organizational and institutional change, we draw upon the emerging literature on social movements and organizations to examine institutional change. Social movement theories are particularly germane to an explanation of such change in that social movement theorists have documented the conditions under which collective action of actors could influence the outcomes of political struggles among them (McAdam, et al., 1996). Accordingly, we conceptualize the existing organizational model as a movement target that is contested by collective action of actors who are marginalized or disadvantaged by the model and view organizational change as the adoption of a new model by an organization. As the
movement succeeds, an increasing number of organizations adopt the new model reflecting the new institution. Consequently, the old model and its underlying institution decline.

Specifically, we examine the roles movement activists both internal and external to organizations play in pressing organizations to adopt a new organizational model. Past research on social movements have focused primarily on the state as the movement targets and changes in legislation as movement outcomes (Davis, et al., 2008). Recently, organizational theorists have begun to examine the effects of social movements on organizational arrangements and performance, such as adoption of recycling programs (Lounsbury, 2001) and employee benefits programs (Raeburn, 2004; Briscoe and Safford, 2008), change of governance systems in universities (Kim, et al., 2007), the prevalence of cooperative organizational forms (Schneiberg, King, and Smith, 2008), the influence of consumer watchdog organizations on corporations’ behavior (Rao, 1998), and decreases in stock prices (King and Soule, 2007). Much of these large-scale, quantitative studies examined how social movements either within or outside organizations influenced organizational practices and performance and ultimately led to organizational and institutional change. But, we still know very little about how movements internal and external to organizations together account for movement success (Schneiburg and Lounsbury, 2008; cf. Tilly, 1999). In incorporating movement activities both within organizations and in organizational fields, we will be able to better understand the effects of movements on organizational change, and on organizations more broadly (Schneiberg, et al., 2008). Furthermore, examining institutional change with a social movements lens highlights the role of actors; and at the same time, it sheds light on the processes in (de)institutionalization of institutional models (Schneiberg and Lounsbury, 2008). In the social movement framework, particularly, actors collectively mobilize resources to alter or maintain existing institutional arrangements based on their vested interests. The contestation and interaction between actors through their mobilization then explain the path of institutional creation and change. Accordingly, the approach of social movements to institutional change helps us better understand the rise and fall of institutions in its emphasis on agencies and their actions.

In this paper, we address the lack of attention to account for both movements internal and external to organizations that shape movement outcomes in the literature to better explain organizational and institutional change by examining the adoption of same-sex partner health benefits among Fortune 500 corporations, 1990-2003. By internal movements, we refer to the collective action by gay and lesbian employee activists and adherents within a corporation. By external movement activities, we mean the activities of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender civil rights advocacy organizations (hereafter GLBT advocacy organizations) and the framing activities by proponents and opponents of the benefits in the organizational fields on the corporation’s propensity to adopt the benefits. Our theoretical and empirical analysis shows that the likelihood of a corporation to adopt same-sex benefits was positively associated with the organized collective action of gay and lesbian employee activists and adherents, mobilization structure of GLBT advocacy organizations, as well as framing activities aligned with pragmatic and moral legitimacy of the benefits. Accordingly, our study sheds light on the effects of movement activities on organizational and institutional change at organizational and field levels.

**Theoretical Background**

A central question in organization theory has been how institutions affect organizational practices. Institutions are composed of logics and governance structures, and are produced, reproduced or enacted by various constituents who are associated with and affected by them (Friedland and Alford, 1991; McAdam and Scott, 2005). Institutional logics then serve as organizing principles that help organizations design their organizational arrangements and practices (Friedland and Alford, 1991). In aligning their organizational arrangements and practices with the institutional logics, organizations show their support or conformity to such logics. While the reproduction or enactment makes institutional
change difficult, institutions do change. Recent studies on institutional change have documented that such change could be triggered by shifts in social, functional, and political pressures or demands (e.g., Oliver, 1992; Haveman and Rao, 1997; Greenwood, et al., 2002; Thornton, 2002) and by individual actors as institutional entrepreneurs who actively pushed or promoted their own self-interests or ideological beliefs (Zilber, 2002; Maguire and Lawrence, 2004).

From a social movement perspective, organizational and institutional change is in part a result of movement and countermovement activities by various actors engaging in resource mobilization and framing activities (Zald and Berger, 1978; McAdam and Scott, 2005; Schneiberg and Lounsbury, 2008; cf. Rao et al., 2000). Specifically, an intra-organizational movement is a set of opinions and beliefs in an organization that represents preferences for changing some elements of organizational practices and justice as well as resource distribution within the organization. A countermovement in an organization is then a set of opinions and beliefs in the organization opposing to the movement. When outcomes of a movement are likely to result in re-allocation of resources that are outside legitimate mechanisms or normative and conventional beliefs in an organization and organizational fields, the contestation between proponents and opponents of the “unconventional politics” becomes more intense (Zald and Berger, 1978). Particularly, when a movement challenges existing institutional models and beliefs, the success of the movement is likely to put an organization’s legitimacy at risk, which in turn may affect the organization’s consequent resource stability and survival (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). As such, the tension between movement and countermovement activities can result political conflicts that are interest-based, norm and value-based, and cognitively-based (Stryker, 2002). Such tension then points to the political struggle between emerging and existing institutions.

In pursuit of their own interests - either economic or ideological, individuals may invest time and resources to coordinate activities and resources as well as seek allies to challenge or defend existing institutional models (Tilly, 1973; Tarrow, 1998). However, the incentive for individuals to participate in collective action to voice grievances and discontent toward existing institutional models may depend upon the calculation of costs and benefits (Olson, 1965; Klandermans, 1984). While engaging in collective action provides an opportunity to pursue collective goods, it can put individual’s career development and job security at risk (e.g., Scully and Segal, 2002; Raeburn, 2004). Thus, a movement induced by collective action may face internal challenges stemming from participants weighing the costs and the benefits of participation. The calculation of costs and benefits may further produce free-rider problems in movement activities (Olson, 1965; Chong, 1991). Particularly, when the outcome of a movement is viewed as collective goods, some (potential) participants may (not) contribute their efforts to help achieve the outcome (Olson, 1965).

In addition to resource mobilization, framing analysts in the social movement literature have proposed that framing is the process of creating the ideational elements of persuasive communication essential for both mobilization of consensus prior to a movement and as the cognitive process necessary for orienting and sustaining collective action (Snow and Benford, 1992). Particularly, frames can provide a compelling sense of injustice and offer a diagnosis and prognosis of a problem and a call to action for its resolution (Gamson, 1995; McAdam et al., 1996). The construction of frames is then keyed to interactive processes and occurs in a recursive relationship with the dynamics of movements and countermovements to shape movement processes and outcomes.

While resource mobilization and framing activities deployed by movement participants influence movement outcomes greatly, recent studies have suggested that the effects of movement mobilization on movement success can be contingent upon institutional contexts. Institutional contexts that create favorable conditions for movement participants can decrease the costs of mobilization and increase individual participants’ incentives to engage in collective action (Tilly, 1978; Cress and Snow, 2000). These in turn increase the probability of movement success. More narrowly, social movement theorists
have suggested that political opportunity structure as an important institutional context that influences actors to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure (Tarrow, 1994). For example, McCammon and her colleagues (McCammon et al., 2001) showed that the presence of gendered opportunity structures and political opportunity structure within a state facilitated the passage of women’s suffrage in the state. Soule and Olzak (2004) reported that women civil rights movements mattered to the state-level of the Equal Rights Amendment ratification decisions, but they mattered more when there were political elite allies present.

We structure the remaining sections by first describing the contextual background of the same-sex partner health benefits and gay and lesbian movements at workplace. To better appreciate the context of our setting, we conducted interviews with individuals involved in GLBT movements within their corporations, attended GLBT workplace conferences and forums, and reviewed publications and press articles related to GLBT issues at workplace. From there, we draw upon research on resource mobilization, framing, and institutional contexts to develop hypotheses to synthesize their effects on the likelihood of a corporation on benefits adoption.

Social Movements in Context: Gay and Lesbian Liberalization at Workplace

The issue of sexual orientation has been regarded as one of the final frontier civil rights movements in the United States (Los Angeles Time, 1994). Similar to other civil rights movements, gay and lesbian movements have been aiming for legitimizing the identity of gay and lesbian individuals and seeking to establish the institution of equal treatment in society. In the workplace, gay and lesbian employees were estimated to constitute between 4% and 17% of the U. S. workforce (Gonsiorek & Weinrich, 1991). As invisible minority, gay and lesbian employees are marginalized or disadvantaged by the institution of heterosexism in that the norm and value vested in the institution have denounced their identity and prevented them from accessing to organizational resources equally. Specifically, the institution of heterosexism refers to the ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behavior, relationship, or community (Herek, 1990). The manifestations of this institution include anti-gay attitudes, prejudice, and discriminatory behavior (Sears, 1997). Thereby, any organizational policies supporting the institution of equal treatment for gay and lesbian employees are defiant of the institution of heterosexism. Our focus in this study is a specific organizational policy – same-sex partner health benefits. Such benefits are particularly salient, contentious and controversial in that they not only recognize the identities of gay and lesbian employees, but their committed long-term relationships as well. Many employee benefits in the United States have historically been based on the legal definition of marriage. Thus, any benefits plan that was defined on the basis of marriage automatically excluded gay and lesbian employees. Moreover, of all employee benefits, health care benefits are particularly important in the United States because there is no comprehensive national health plan and employers are often the primary providers of health insurance (Gossett, 1994).

The first employer to offer its health insurance programs to partners of their gay and lesbian employees was the Village Voice in 1982. By 1990, there were only about twenty employers (public and private) across the United States extending benefits to the partners of employees in same-sex relationships. No Fortune 500 company had offered same-sex partner health benefits until 1992, when Levis Strauss and Silicon Graphic Inc. adopted such policies. In the following year, five other Fortune 500 corporations, Microsoft, Oracle, Apple Computer, Harvey-Davidson, and Starbucks, followed suit to offer same-sex partner health benefits. The numbers then grew slowly over the next few years, and then grew rapidly.

The rise of same-sex partner health benefits was driven in part by GLBT social movements within organizations and in organizational fields. For GLBT movements within organizations, gay and
lesbian employee activists have drawn on the “civil rights master frame” (McAdam, 1994) to argue that same-sex partner benefits were a matter of equal pay for equal work since benefits comprised a significant portion of employee’s compensation (Adams & Solomon, 2000). Gay and lesbian employee activists further framed such benefits as ideologies of ethics and profits to facilitate transformation of corporate policies. In some cases, they also worked with other minority groups in their organizations to collectively advocate equal treatment. In addition to developing a tactical repertoire on their own, gay and lesbian employee activists – either individually or collectively – attended to workshops or conferences organized by GLBT advocacy organizations such as Out & Equal and Equality Forum to acquire information and experience related to how to change the institution of heterosexism within their corporations.

Like other employee groups at workplace, GLBT ERGs serves many purposes to gay and lesbian employees. One important purpose is to legitimate their identity and seek institutional resources (e.g., access to financial support) and recognition to facilitate transformation of workplace heterosexism. Notably, many ERGs provided confidential membership to those not out at work. This helped not only membership recruitment but also to inform management about the numbers of GLBT persons in the organization as this demographic information was rarely ever tracked. They also looked for opportunities to form allies with management elites and acquire executive sponsorships to legitimize their existence and to influence corporate policies. In addition to the activities within corporations, some ERGs participated local gay and lesbian networks to exchange information and experience with local gay and lesbian activists and employees of other organizations. Some ERGs also helped ERGs in other organizations to advocate equal treatment for GLBT employees in their organizations.

In addition to employee gay and lesbian activism, gay and lesbian advocacy organizations played an important role in the gay and lesbian liberalization at the workplace and the rise of same-sex benefits in particular. The national advocacy organizations (e.g., Human Rights Campaign (HRC), National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), Gay and Lesbian United Employees, Equality Forum) as well as local advocacy organizations not only worked with gay and lesbian employee activists to help them promote equality at their corporations but also advocated the importance of such equality through their campaigns and publications. For example, both HRC and NGLTF published manuals on how to establish employee resource groups and gay-friendly policies within organizations. Equality Forum frequently issued letters to management of corporations to ask for their attention to equal treatment for GLBT employees.

Further, advocacy organizations frequently participated and sponsored the events held by other advocacy organizations – either national or local organizations. Such participation helped to develop common understanding of collective purposes and facilitated cooperation and coordination among them with respect to strategies associated attainment of movement goals. Advocacy organizations also mobilized resources to organize national workplace conferences and workshops (e.g., Out & Equal Conferences) in which they brought activists and gay and lesbian friendly employees together to facilitate and develop strategies and exchange workplace experience. In addition, through their publications and press releases, advocacy organizations put great effort to advocate that the adoption of same-sex partner benefits could help corporations to increase productivity, enhancing recruiting and retention of employees, and expanding markets through their various activities (Raeburn, 2004: 218-224). Such advocacy helped legitimize same-sex partner health benefits, which in turn facilitated the transformation of workplace heterosexism in general, and the adoption of the benefits policies in particular.

However, the gay and lesbian movements advocating for the institution of equal treatment in the workplace has been faced with stiff opposition from anti-gay activists and religious conservatives in particular. Countermovements mobilized by anti-gay activists and religious conservatives contended that the same-sex partner benefits were a form of a “special right” that endorsed gay and lesbian relationships. The benefits also attacked family values. For example, to protest Apple’s adoption of the same-sex
partner health benefits, anti-gay activists and adherents in Texas advocated against Apple’s proposal of a production plant in Texas and argued that “One Apple today, take family value away!” The well-publicized boycott of Disney organized by the Southern Baptist Convention after Disney’s decision to offer same-sex benefits serve another example to shed light on countermovement mobilization. By offering same-sex partner benefits, Disney was charged with abandoning its “family values” foundation by anti-gay activists. Consequently, in 1996, the nearly 16 million members of the Southern Baptist Convention, voted to boycott Disney because of its lesbian- and gay-friendly employment policies. To counteract the efforts of the Southern Baptist Convention, many GLBT advocacy organizations such as HRC and GLAAD launched campaigns to support Disney’s initiatives. The activities of countermovements also took place in the grassroots of corporations. After Lotus announced its decision to offer same-sex benefits, for example, the company’s electronic mail systems were crashed by emails that were against or uncomfortable with such a decisions. In 2002, Boeing was targeted by anti-gay activists with a shareholder action to overturn its gay-inclusive non-discrimination policy, which ultimately failed (Raeburn, 2004).

Movements Internal to Organizations

The movements within organizations can differ from those outside organizations in their resource access, forms of political opportunities and repertoire of tactics (Zald and Berger, 1978; Katzenstein, 1998; Kim, et al., 2007) because challenges forwarded by movement participants to those who occupy higher formal positions in an organization can put the participants at risk, such as layoff and various forms of punishments (Zald and Berg, 1978; Scully and Segal, 2002; Scully and Creed, 2005). We suggest that the presence of a GLBT ERG within a corporation could play a crucial role in the adoption of same-sex health partner benefits by the corporation. To the extent that the establishment of the ERG in a corporation sheds light on a certain degree of legitimacy toward gay and lesbian identity within the corporation, the ERG helped participant recruitments through various tactical repertoires gay and lesbian employee activists deploy, such workshops, informal gathering, and slogans and symbols (Raeburn, 2004; Scully and Creed, 2005; cf. Scully and Segal, 2002). As the number of participants, either gay and lesbian employees or allies, increased, institutional resources that allowed ERG to engage in challenging workplace heterosexism potentially increased. Furthermore, this form of organization could serve as a platform for gay and lesbian employee activists and allies to share information and experience and a channel for them interact with other activists and allies outside the organization. The platform and channel in turn might help gay and lesbian employee activists to mobilize various resources and develop strategies to fight for further acceptance of their identity and to seek gay- and lesbian-friendly organizational policies such as same-sex partner health benefits. Accordingly, we propose that

Hypothesis 1: A corporation with a GLBT ERG will be positively associated with the corporation’s rate of same-sex partner health benefits adoption

Movements External to Organizations

Past research on social movements has suggested that movement outcomes depend upon movement efficacy (Schurman, 2004), which is in part contingent upon the infrastructure of movement resources and the relationships among movement organizations (McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Ganz, 2000). Effective organization of the resources held by movement organizations may help self-production of resources in which leaders in movement organizations can create or add value to resources that have been aggregated, co-opted, or provided by patrons (Edwards and McCarthy, 2007). The self-production of resources in turn helps social movement activists better engage in tactical repertoires, form coalitions among movement organizations and with allies, and create organizational templates for enacting specific
types of collective events or grievances toward existing institutional authorities. It can also promote effective transfer of information and knowledge between movement activists who are internal or external organizations by providing channels such as conferences and workshops.

Turning to gay and lesbian movements at workplace, we propose that the ability of GLBT advocacy organizations to influence the outcomes of gay and lesbian workplace movements depended upon the “industry” structure of the organizations. GLBT advocacy organizations tended to have similar movement priorities and goals related to GLBT civil rights. However, the organizations cooperated with one another to collectively pursue such priorities and espouse the goals, on the one hand, and they competed for similar resources, on the other hand (Zald and McCarthy, 1980; Soule and King, 2008). To materialize the collective resources mobilized by GLBT advocacy organizations, a structure that facilitated coordination and cooperation was then required. Such a structure was more likely to emerge when the distribution of resources held by the organizations was concentrated among few organizations (White, 2004). Particularly, the skewed distribution of resources could help formation of leadership among GLBT advocacy organizations. The relatively large resources held by the few organizations might also allow the organizations to mobilize the resources and transform them for the collective purposes. As such, the difficulties associated with coordination and cooperation could be reduced.

To this end, the concentration of GLBT advocacy organizations’ resources might influence an organization’s propensity to adopt same-sex partner health benefits in two ways. First, the ease of coordination derived from the skewed resource distribution of GLBT advocacy organizations helped the advocacy organizations to better mobilize resources to deploy various tactics challenging the institutional arrangements manifesting the institution of heterosexism and legitimatizing gay and lesbian identity in the society. This, in turn, indirectly enhanced movement mobilization in the workplace (c.f. Cress and Snow, 2000; Haveman, et al., 2008). Second, and more directly, the concentration of GLBT advocacy organizations’ resources might lead to better organizing activities (as for local and national conferences and workshops, and publications) that facilitated information and knowledge exchange between gay and lesbian activists within and outside corporations, allowed gay and lesbian employee activists themselves to share experience, either success or failure experiences, and collectively developed more effective tactics to challenge existing institutional arrangements. Taken altogether, the mobilization strength of external movements derived from the concentrated resources of GLBT advocacy organizations could both directly and indirectly influence the likelihood of a corporation to adopt the benefits. Therefore, we propose,

Hypothesis 2: The concentration of GLBT advocacy organizations’ resources will be positively associated with an organization’s rate of same-sex partner health benefits adoption

Framing Activities in Organizational Fields

Past studies of social movements on framing activities and their effects have emphasized two aspects of framing – problem identification and solutions – that influence the effectiveness of framing and movement outcomes. Particularly, effective frames tend to be the ones that resonate with the potential understandings of adherents and sympathizers. Resonance can be enhanced by alignment processes that bridge the frame’s messages to adherents’ or bystanders’ structurally congruent ideas, amplifying a particular value or belief, extending ideological messages to a wider pool of potential constituents and adherents (Snow and Benford, 1988). Accordingly, framing has the potential to achieve movement goals by facilitating resource mobilization and gaining support from adherents and bystanders.

Although framing deployed by movement participants is important to movement success, the legitimacy accounts in framing activities used by movement and countermovement participants would
have significant impact on movement outcomes, and organizational and institutional change in particular (den Hond and de Bakker, 2007). Activists and their supporters can engage in rhetoric framing activities to challenge the legitimacy of existing or new organizational arrangements manifesting the existing or new institutions, which in turn influence the likelihood of organizations to abandon or adopt the arrangements (den Hond and deBakker, 2007). Among various types of legitimacy discussed in the literature, two types of legitimacy used by activists to challenge organizational practices, and seem particularly relevant to shape movement outcomes – pragmatic and moral (den Hond and de Bakker, 2007). Pragmatic legitimacy rests on the self-interested calculations of an organization’s most immediate audiences. The audiences are likely to scrutinize organizational behavior to determine the practical consequences, for them, of any activity (Suchman, 1995). Moral legitimacy refers to a positive normative evaluation of the organization and its activities, which rests on judgments about whether the activity is “the right thing to do” (Suchman, 1995). The framing activities tapping into pragmatic and moral legitimacy of new models should exert great influence on corporation’s decision makers’ support for particular institutions.

As for the institutions of workplace heterosexism and equal treatment for gay and lesbian employees, we argue that the framing activities on same-sex partner health benefits aligning with pragmatic and moral legitimacy in organizational fields should influence movement outcomes and a corporation’s likelihood of providing the benefits in particular. Specifically, both movement and countermovement participants engage in framing activities to make legitimacy claims for the institutional models they advocate gaining support from constituents in organizational fields. The recursive framing activities then shape movement processes and outcomes (Snow and Benford, 1988). When there were more framing activities aligning with pragmatic legitimacy of the benefits in relation to that of against the benefits, the presence of differential framing activities could help gay and lesbian employee activists to recruit movement participants and serve as cultural resources to voice their grievances and discontent towards existing organizational arrangements and to advocate for benefits adoption. The differential pragmatic legitimacy framing activities also helped their corporations’ elites to understanding the potential benefits associated with benefits adoption (c.f. Skrentny, 2006). Similarly, when there are more positive framing activities tapping into moral legitimacy of the benefits relative to negative framing activities related to moral legitimacy, the positive and differential moral framing activities might enhance the probability of movement success by gaining support from adherents and sympathizers within organizations. Unlike pragmatic legitimacy, moral legitimacy could draw attention of elites in organizations to underlying equality principles associated with the benefits adoption. This in turn facilitated resource mobilization within corporations and to increase the likelihood of corporations to offer the benefits to partners of their gay and lesbian employees. The abovementioned reasoning then leads to following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 3a:** The higher the positive moral legitimacy accounts relative to negative ones, the higher the organization’s rate of same-sex partner health benefits adoption

**Hypothesis 3b:** The higher the positive pragmatic legitimacy accounts relative to negative ones, the higher the organization’s rate of same-sex partner health benefits adoption

**Methods**

**Data and Sample**

Our sample consists of all corporations listed on the *Fortune 500* in 2002. To cover initial adoptions of same-sex partner health benefits by *Fortune 500* corporations between 1990 and 2003, we obtained corporations’ financial data from the *COMPUSTAT* database. Before 1994, *Fortune* reported the
rankings of manufacturing and services corporations separately. After 1994, *Fortune* reported the rankings of all large corporations. Thus, for the years 1990 to 1993, we re-ranked the corporations based on sales and selected those ever ranked within the top 500. Due to missing data, the number of corporations was reduced from 500 in our initial sample to 491.

**Dependent Variable and Analysis**

Our dependent variable is the adoption rate of same-sex partner health benefits by a focal corporation when it was at risk of adoption in a given year. We compiled the adoption data from two major sources: the *HRC WorkNet* database and the *Factiva* media database. *HRC WorkNet*, maintained by Human Rights Campaign, provides comprehensive coverage of adoption of the benefits in *Fortune 500* corporations from 1999 to 2003. We searched *Factiva*, to identify the corporations in our sample that offered the benefits prior to 1999. Combining these two data sources, we were able to identify 195 corporations that had adopted the benefits by the end of 2003. We were unable to identify the year of adoption for ten corporations. Accordingly, we excluded them from our analysis, resulting in a final sample of 185 adoptions and 481 corporations. We also made efforts to determine if there were any corporations that abandoned the benefits after their adoption and found none. After excluding the missing data, including the founding years of ERGs (see below), we transformed data on the remaining 481 corporations into annual spells, yielding a data set with 5,028 at-risk corporation-years. We coded 1 for the year when a corporation started to offer the benefits to its same-sex employees’ partners, 0 otherwise.

We then estimated a Cox model, where the hazard rate of adoption was modeled as the product of a specific baseline hazard rate and an exponential function of time-varying covariates:

\[ h(t) = h_0(t) \exp(\beta X_t) \]  

where \( h(t) \) is the hazard rate of adoption at time \( t \), \( h_0(t) \) is a (possibly time-dependent) nuisance function that is not estimated, \( X_t \) is a vector of time-varying covariates at time \( t \), and \( \beta \) is the vector of coefficients corresponding to the covariates. The Cox model was preferred here because we did not know the exact timing of adoption within the spells and because we had “tied” events, that is, years in which more than one corporation adopted the benefits policies (Allison 2004). We used the Breslow method to handle “tied” events as we had a relatively small number of “tied” events in comparison to the overall number of corporations at risk in any given year (Allison 2004). We also used a robust variance estimator to cluster corporations based on the states in which their headquarters were located to control for state-specific unobserved heterogeneity to capture differences in idiosyncratic state local institutional environments. Further, we also checked if our models violated the proportional assumption of the hazard functions in the Cox model (Allison 2004) and they did not.

**Independent and Control Variables**

All our independent and control variables were lagged one year for the analysis to avoid simultaneity problems.

**Presence of ERG.** To test Hypothesis 1 – the presence of ERG would increase a corporation’s likelihood of benefits adoption, we made great effort to determine if our sampled corporations had ERG and the year when the ERG was established. Specifically, the *HRC WorkNet* database documented if a corporation had an ERG and its contact information. We also obtained a list of ERGs from NGLTF that provided contact information of each ERG. We compared both sources of information and used such information to contact correspondent persons whose corporations were included in our sample to ask for the founding years of their groups. In addition, we asked our informants in our interviews and some conference participants to identify if our sampled corporations had ERGs and their contact information. In
total, we identified 82 corporations in our sample where their ERGs were established before 2003. We then constructed a time-varying ERG dummy variable. That is, for each corporation-year, we coded a corporation with ERG as 1 in a given year; otherwise 0. Support of the hypothesis will require a positive coefficient estimate for Presence of ERG.

Concentration of GLBT rights advocacy organizations. Hypothesis 2 proposed that the concentration of GLBT rights advocacy organizations’ resources would increase a corporation’s likelihood of benefits adoption. We obtained the financial statements of GLBT rights advocacy organizations from National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS). The NCCS has documented information on all registered charitable organizations since 1989. We extracted the amount of public donations received by each GLBT rights advocacy organization in a given year to construct the concentration of the GLBT rights advocacy organizations. Public donations are a result of prior resource mobilization efforts, which can be the resources for future mobilization to promote movement claims. Formally, we calculated Concentration of GLBT rights advocacy organizations by using Herfindhal-Hirschman index to capture the structural property of the advocacy organizations’ cooperation and coordination capability. Specifically, we summed the squared proportion of a GLBT rights advocacy organization’s public donations over the total public donations of all GLBT rights advocacy organizations in a given year. A positive coefficient estimate of this index will be evidence in support of the hypothesis.

Framing activities. The data used to construct framing activities related to same-sex partner health benefits between 1990 and 2002 were drawn from the top three newspapers, measured by circulation, in the United States, The New York Times, USA Today, and Wall Street Journal. Past research has suggested that press coverage of social issues reflects a variety of opinions, document the scope of social issues, critique the alternative proposals for coping with such issues, and focus on tactical efforts of activists and their opponents and involved parties to cope with them (e.g., Gitlin, 1980). To ensure complete coverage of electronically available articles for this period, we retrieved full-text articles from both Factiva and Lexis-Nexis databases. We identified 586 relevant, non-duplicated articles, using search strings that we developed to capture the variation in terminology and alternative names related to same-sex partner health benefits.

Hypotheses 3a and 3b proposed that more positive arguments of pragmatic and moral legitimacy in relation to negative ones would increase a corporation’s likelihood of benefits adoption. Two authors followed Suchman’s (1995) definitions of pragmatic and moral legitimacy to code the arguments in each article with .71 of inter-coder reliability (Cohen’s kappa=.71). The inconsistent codings were discussed and consensus was reached. Examples of coding are “… because the benefits will make recruitment and retention of workers easier…” (positive pragmatic legitimacy account), “Despite talks with its gay and lesbian caucus, Xerox Corp., decided against coverage because of cost” (negative pragmatic legitimacy account), “….[benefits] are a matter of equal pay for work” said Richard Jennings, executive director of Hollywood Supports, a group focusing on issues confronting gay people in the entertainment business” (positive moral legitimacy account), and “….. some of Commins’ employees complained [the benefits] endorse “antifamily lifestyles” (negative moral legitimacy account). In 586 articles, there are 235 legitimacy accounts coded (107 pragmatic and 128 moral).

To capture the relative proportion of positive and negative legitimacy accounts in framing activities in coded articles, we adopted the measure of the Janis-Fadner coefficient of imbalance (Janis and Fadner, 1965). As prior studies suggested (e.g., Janis and Fadner, 1965; Coombs, 1992; Deephouse, 1996), this measure has many useful properties, such as (1) a range between -1 and 1; (2) a meaningful zero point when there are equal numbers of positive and negative accounts; (3) an increase/decrease in the coefficient when the number of positive/negative accounts increases. Specifically, we constructed Positive moral legitimacy accounts relative to negative ones and Positive pragmatic legitimacy accounts relative to negative ones separately to test the hypotheses by using the following formula:
\[
\frac{[P^2 - PN]}{Total^2} \text{ if } P > N; \ 0 \text{ if } P=N, \text{ and } \frac{[PN - N^2]}{Total^2} \text{ if } N>P,
\]

(2)

where P is the number of positive legitimacy accounts, N is the number of negative accounts. Figure 2 shows the Janis-Fadner coefficients for both moral and pragmatic legitimacy accounts in the observed time period. To support the hypotheses, positive coefficient estimates of Positive moral legitimacy accounts relative to negative ones and Positive pragmatic legitimacy accounts relative to negative ones are required.

**Control variables.** In addition to main effect variables, we included corporation-specific and environmental control variables to rule out alternative explanations of benefits adoption. First, we included Number of employees a corporation had in a given year and second, we controlled for the effect of Total assets on adoption. Larger corporations are likely to attract attention from various stakeholders and the public on their practices, which in turn might affect their rate of adoption compared to smaller corporations. We further grouped the corporations into seven industries based on the 2-digits of their primary SIC codes. We then included six industry dummy variables to control for industry-specific idiosyncrasies that may influence corporations’ adoption decisions: (1) mining, utilities, and construction; (2) manufacturing; (3) wholesale and retail trade; (4) transportation and warehousing; (5) information technology; and (6) financial, real estate, and insurance. Corporations outside the six industries were collapsed into the reference group for the analysis.

We also included several variables to control for environmental impact. First, we obtained Industry unemployment rate from United States Department of Labor Bureau to control for the effect of the labor market conditions on the adoption (e.g., Ingram and Simon 1996). Second, we included Number of adoptions within industry and Number of adoptions within state to control for the effects of other corporations’ adoption on the rate of a focal corporation’s adoption (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 2001). Third, the total number of accounts in press articles mentioning the benefits and the press articles themselves could attract decision makers’ attention, which in turn could influence their decisions of adoption (c.f., Pollock and Rindova 2003). Thus, we included the total numbers of moral and pragmatic accounts in our sampled press articles mentioning the benefits in each year (Total number of legitimacy accounts and Total number of press articles) to control for their effects on the adoption. Fourth, past research suggested resources held by movement participants exert great influence on movement outcomes (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). Thus, we included the total amount of public donations GLBT advocacy organizations (GLBT advocacy organizations’ resources) in our sample to control for its effect. Fifth, political opportunity thesis in the social movement literature suggests that the presence of political opportunity could induce movement participation and reduce the cost of mobilization, which in turn affect movement outcomes. The presence of state non-discrimination law based on sexual orientation could be a kind of political opportunity for gay and lesbian employees and activists. Thus, we included Number of state non-discrimination laws to control for its effect. The first to enact such a law was the District of Columbia in 1977. It was followed by Wisconsin in 1982 and Massachusetts in 1989. By the end of 2002, 14 states had enacted such laws. In 1996, the city of San Francisco passed an ordinance that required any firms that had business in the city to offer same-sex partner benefits to their gay and lesbian employees. As such, we controlled its effect on the rate of a corporation’s adoption by including San Francisco City’s ordinance, where we coded the years prior to 1996 as 0; 1 otherwise.

Correlations among theoretical variables are within a reasonable range (below .40). We followed a strategy of estimating hierarchically nested models to check that multicollinearity was not causing less precise parameter estimates (Kennedy 1998).
Results

Table 1 reports maximum-likelihood estimates of the rate of a Fortune 500 corporation’s adoption of same-sex partner health benefits. Model 1 provides the baseline that includes all control variables. In Models 2 to 5, we progressively included each of theoretical variables in order of theoretical discussion and derived a full model, Model 6.

Hypothesis 1 posited that a corporation with an ERG would increase its rate of benefits adoption. The positive coefficient estimates of Presence of ERG in Models 2 and 6 (.619, p<.01; .61, p<.010, respectively) provide support for the hypothesis. These suggest that an organized internal GLBT movement such as an employee resource group significantly helped gay and lesbian employee activists to successfully press their corporation to offer health benefits to their partners. Hypothesis 2 suggested that emergence of a structure of GLBT advocacy organizations that facilitated better cooperation and coordination among the organizations would facilitate the rate of benefits adoption. Positive coefficient estimates of Concentration of GLBT rights advocacy organizations in Models 2 and 6 supported the hypothesis (16.405, p<.01; 13.79, p<.10). These imply that corporations were quicker to adopt the benefits when public donations were concentrated on a few GLBT advocacy organizations. The concentration helped external movements to better organize resources to positively influence GLBT equal treatment at workplace.

Hypotheses 3a and 3b proposed that legitimacy accounts in framing activities by movements and countermovements would exert great influence on a corporation’s rate of benefits adoption. The positive, significant coefficient estimate of Positive moral legitimacy accounts relative to negative ones in Model 4 serves evidence to support Hypothesis 3a (1.343, p<.01). Similarly, the significant coefficient estimate of Positive pragmatic legitimacy accounts relative to negative ones in Model 5 provides support for Hypothesis 3b (.986, p<.01). In Model 6, we included all main effects of our theoretical variables. All the variables Positive moral legitimacy accounts relative to negative ones but are in the predicted direction. Positive moral legitimacy accounts relative to negative ones becomes not significant. These suggest that framing activities related to moral legitimacy of the same-sex partner health benefits served little influence on the rate of the benefits adoption by corporations after controlling for movements internal and external to the corporations in the observed time period.

The effects of several control variables are worth mentioning. Amount of GLBT advocacy organizations’ public support had no effect on the rate of benefits adoption by corporations in our sample. Together with the positive effect of Concentration of GLBT rights advocacy organizations these highlight the importance of movement structure within movement organizations (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). Number of moral legitimacy accounts and Number of pragmatic accounts have no effects in most of the models. Taking into accounts of the relative effects of positive and negative legitimacy accounts, these suggest the importance of relative strength of framing activities by proponents and opponents of the benefits in shaping the rate of benefits adoption by corporations. In addition, the positive effect of state non-discrimination laws suggests the legal environment external to corporations presented political opportunities for gay and lesbian employee activists to use them as institutional resources to advocate the benefits adoption. It is also possible that such laws themselves served as “coercive” forces to encourage corporations to attend to the institution of equal treatment by offering health benefits to partners of their gay and lesbian employees (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 2003).
Discussions And Conclusion

How movements affect organizational practices and potentially trigger institutional changes has begun to attract attention from organization theorists in the past few years. Thus far, we have learnt that the emergence of recycling programs in universities was in part due to student activists’ activities (Lounbury, 2001), that the switch to the Presidential election system from the appointment system in Korean universities was driven by political struggle within universities (Kim, et al., 2007), and that the adoption of employee benefits programs was influenced by employee activists and prior adoptions by activism-resistance organizations (Briscoe and Safford, 2008; Raeburn, 2004). Although these studies have significantly advanced our understanding of the power of movements in organizational and institutional change, we know little about how movements internal and external to organizations interact with field dynamics to influence organizational and institutional change. Our theoretical and empirical analysis revealed that both internal and external movements exerted great influence on the rate of benefits adoption by corporations. The framing activities and institutional dynamics in organizational fields also greatly affected such benefits adoption. Accordingly, our study makes several important contributions to the emerging literature on social movements and organizations.

Though recent studies on social movements and organizations have made significant progress with respects to the effects of movements on organizational behavior and outcomes (e.g., Lounsbury, 2001; Kim, et al., 2007; King and Soule, 2007). Most studies drew upon a single explanation – movements either internal or external to organizations – to examine movement impacts on organizations. As Schneiberg and his colleagues (Schneiberg, et al., 2008) suggested, using a single explanation cannot fully capture multifaceted influences of movement mobilization on movement targets. To better appreciate such multifaceted influences, we incorporated movements internal and external to organizations as well as framing dynamics to examine the impact of movement mobilization on changes in corporation’s policies toward their GLBT employees.

Our results on GLBT mobilization (both internal and external to corporations) are broadly consistent with what the resource mobilization thesis would have predicted (McCarthy and Zald, 1977); at the same time, they provide one important contingency to the thesis. With few exceptions (Tilly, 1999), most past studies of resource mobilization have tended to emphasize the strength of mobilization as numbers of memberships or movement organizations (e.g., McCammon, 2001; Soule and Olzak, 2004) and the importance of mobilizing channels (McCammon and Zald, 1971; McAdam, 1996) in attaining movement outcomes. As Tilly (1999) cautioned us, the solidarity and coordination among movement participants are critical to movement processes and outcomes. Our examination of internal organization of GLBT advocacy organizations echoes Tilly’s (1999) contention in that the concentration of GLBT advocacy organizations’ resources were positively associated with the rate of benefits adoptions by corporations after controlling the amount of resources held by these organizations. Accordingly, our theoretical and empirical accounts contribute to the resource mobilization thesis by adding this important modification.

The framing thesis in the social movement literature emphasizes framing as cultural resources that help movement participants to recruit adherents and gain support from bystanders, which may then influence movement success (Snow and Benford, 1988; Cress and Snow, 2000). However, most large-scale studies derived from the framing thesis have tended to examine only the framing activities deployed by movement participants on movement outcomes (McCammon, et al., 2001). Our study highlighted the contestation derived from moral and pragmatic legitimacy accounts embedded in framing discourse of leading press significantly shaped movement outcomes. Particularly, positive moral or pragmatic accounts relative to negative ones increased the rate of benefits adoption by corporations.
Turning to organizational and institutional change, recent studies have demonstrated such change is in part driven by changes in broader social, political environments (Oliver, 1992; Haveman and Rao, 1997) and theorization efforts of powerful agents (Greenwood, et al., 2002; Maguire and Lawrence, 2004). In contrast, our analysis here highlighted the collective action mobilized by marginalized or institutionally disadvantageous agents in triggering organizational change and then leading to institutional change in organizational fields more broadly. Thereby, our theoretical account shed light on the role of agency in institutionalization of an emerging institution.

Though this study examined organizational and institutional change with lenses of movement mobilization and field dynamics, it is not without limitations. The limitations are then opportunities for future exploration. First, our approach to movement mobilization is consistent with past large-scale social movement studies. Nevertheless, our research design limited us to explore the various tactics deployed by participants of internal and external movements. Since movement participants within organizations tend to bear the risk of job security (Scully and Segal, 2002; Zald and Berger, 1978), we wonder if tactical repertoires of internal and external movements were systematic different in terms of their strategies and effectiveness. Second, our data prevented us from exploring the political opportunity model in the social movement literature in more detail although we found some indirect evidence of its effect (i.e., state non-discrimination laws). Future research into political opportunity structure within corporations that help employee activists to attain movement goals is warranted.

More broadly, as McAdam and Scott (2005) and Schneiberg and Lounsbury (2008) rightly point out, linking social movement theses with organizational and institutional analysis can address many unexplored areas of research in organization theory. One important area is how the effect of agency on organizational and institutional change varies across the institutionalization process. Our analysis of the moderating effect of field dynamics on the effect of internal movement mobilization on movement outcomes pinpoint such possibility; at the same time, we wonder if the effect of movement mobilization varies across the stages of (de) institutionalization and if the tactics used by movement participants evolve over time so do their effectiveness as emerging institutions are on the path to institutionalization. To this end, we see great opportunities to mobilize social movement theses to attain better understanding of organizational and institutional change.
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<td>vs M1</td>
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<td>Robust standard errors in brackets, ** p &lt; .10, *** p &lt; .05, **** p &lt; .01</td>
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