

1-2009

# Thinking Outside the Master's House: New Knowledge Movements and the Emergence of Academic Disciplines

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## Citation

Arthur, M. M. L. (2009). Thinking outside the master's house: New knowledge movements and the emergence of academic disciplines. *Social Movement Studies*, 8(1), 73-87. doi:10.1080/14742830802591176

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**THINKING OUTSIDE THE MASTER'S HOUSE:**  
**NEW KNOWLEDGE MOVEMENTS AND THE EMERGENCE**  
**OF ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES**

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Final version available at <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14742830802591176>

Arthur, Mikaila Mariel Lemonik. 2009. "Thinking Outside the Master's House: New Knowledge Movements and the Emergence of Academic Disciplines." *Social Movement Studies* 8(1): 73-87.

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\*I would like to thank Jeff Goodwin, Ed Lehman, Sarah Kaufman, Sandro Segre, and Edward T. Walker for their comments on an earlier version of this paper. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the American Sociological Association's 2006 Annual Meetings in Montreal.

## **ABSTRACT**

This paper proposes a theoretical framework for understanding emergent disciplines as knowledge-focused social movement phenomena called New Knowledge Movements, or NKMs. The proposed theoretical framework is developed through a synthesis of new social movement theory and Frickel and Gross's Scientific/Intellectual Movements (SIMs) model. In contrast to the SIMs model, this paper argues that many new disciplines emerge through contentious collective action on the part of political and intellectual outsiders rather than through the action of intellectual elites. The framework is demonstrated and tested through a narrative exploration based on secondary sources and scholar-activist tests of the emergence of two disciplines, women's studies and Asian American studies, in the United States. Suggestions for future applications are provided.

## **KEYWORDS**

Social movements, knowledge, Asian American studies, women's studies, higher education

THE POLITICS QUESTION, TO SUM UP, IS NOT ERROR, ILLUSION, ALIENATED CONSCIOUSNESS, OR IDEOLOGY: IT IS TRUTH ITSELF (FOUCAULT 1994 133).

This paper proposes that new intellectual fields, or disciplines, can and sometimes do emerge as social movements. These movements use the structure of an academic discipline as a strategic tool for mobilizing energy towards a variety of goals—the creation of new knowledge chief among them, but also including other goals such as increasing the social visibility of a constituency, increasing access to higher education, and gaining political and economic power. And these movements end in a way familiar to social movements scholars—by moving along the continuum between movements and interest groups (Freeman and Johnson 1999) as they become institutionalized into the normal structure of intellectual and academic fields and therefore lose their ability to truly challenge the status quo (Miller 1999).

In many cases, these “New Knowledge Movements” (hereafter NKMs) have close ties to broader societal movements. “[I]here are ways of attempting to transform structure through agency other than visible clashes in the street” (Mirza and Reay 2000 525). For instance, the Black social movements of the 1950s and 1960s pushed for a variety of social, political, legal, and economic changes, of which Black studies and intellectual Afrocentrism were only one part (Jewell 1985). And “ideology, particularly for a radical movement, is its dynamic core, the reason for its existence, the embodiment of its values, its analysis of society, and its prescriptions for change” (Bouchier 1977 25). In contemporary industrialized societies, where “academic organizations are a primary site for the creation and evolution of knowledge categories” (Gumport and Snyderman 2002 379), this means

that ideology is enacted through disciplinary organization.

### ***What Does it Mean to Develop New Knowledge?***

For some scholars of disciplinary emergence, disciplines are merely justifications for social practice (Wood 1979). In this perspective, in other words, a diffuse network of scholars conducting research within traditional disciplines become interested in a new area of research for objective academic reasons or perceived applied need (Tierny 1989). As the research program develops, scholars form journals, associations, and eventually a discipline to encapsulate the work which they are doing. Perhaps in some cases this model of disciplinary emergence is correct—it would be useful, for instance, in understanding the (perhaps apocryphal) roots of genetics in Gregor Mendel's pea plants.

For many years, however, scholars tracing the lineages of disciplines have acknowledged the movement-like roots of many disciplines and the links between these disciplines and broader societal social movements, but they have failed to subject these links to a rigorous and theoretically informed social movement analysis. Even the discipline of sociology itself began in the United States partly through the social science movement (Bernard 1930), a fact which is acknowledged by contemporary historians of sociology (Blasi 2005). While some research on the social movement-like elements of discipline formation does exist, that research has primarily focused on the development of knowledge in scientific fields (Epstein 1996; Frickel 2004; Levin 2005). In fact, the foundation of science itself as a rightful object of higher education is as an NKM (Slaughter 1997). However, as Slaughter goes on to say, social movements may be a normative process of curriculum change, not limited only to science.

Those scholars who have explored the social movement features of NKMs have drawn on a variety of theoretical perspectives in social movement studies. In the past, much of this research focused on resource mobilization, particularly the ways in which activists seek sponsorship and draw on intellectual resources to enhance their abilities to be heard by scientists and the society at large (Epstein 1996). More recently, science studies scholars have drawn on the notion of framing (Benford and Snow 2000) to explain how knowledge activists create diagnoses and solutions for intellectual problems (Frickel 2004). However, as Epstein notes, sociologists of science who wish to include social movement theory in their analyses have often ignored the literature surrounding New Social Movements, a literature vitally important to any discussion of knowledge and identity in social movement organization.

The New Social Movements model focuses in part on “the generation of oppositional meanings’ in relation to a wide range of hegemonic social and educational values” (Mueller 1992, as cited in Mirza and Reay 2000 531). Melucci’s New Social Movements require stable networks of communication, hidden networks that are situated within variable environments, and political elasticity in order to gain control over the knowledge codes and meaning making that allow the development of new forms of powerful identity. This model highlights the difference between particularly modern social movements rooted in the emergence of a knowledge economy and earlier class-based social movements rooted in a goods-based economy. In particular, the New Social Movements model suggests that now, the creation of knowledge can be the basis for power and action (Melucci 1994). Melucci explains that control over the creation of knowledge and access to knowledge resources is not distributed equally in society and that this inequality is even greater for “knowledge” (as learned academically) than it is for “wisdom” (as learned experientially). We can see

the general effects of this transformation in the increasing importance of higher education for getting ahead in contemporary industrialized societies. An additional effect pointed out by Melucci is the increasing search for personal identity as rooted in networks of others with similar identities. In other words, as Foucault notes, "...all these present struggles revolve around the question: who are we?" (Foucault 1994 331).

The New Social Movements model can not stand on its own, however, because it lacks a focus on the organization, resources, and strategy of social movements—in particular, how these factors may matter for the potential impacts social movements can have. Two more recent attempts to understand the workings of knowledge in social movements and related phenomena have advanced beyond some of these limitations: Frickel and Gross's social/intellectual movements perspective and Eyerman and Jamison's cognitive praxis approach.

Frickel and Gross's perspective is built around their notion of the scientific/intellectual movement (SIM), which they believe is something similar to but still separate from a social movement (Frickel and Gross 2005). They propose the following as the elements defining a SIM:

1. At their core, SIMs have the production and diffusion of knowledge as their goal;
2. SIMs engage in contentious intellectual practices;
3. SIMs are explicitly political in the sense that they want to affect power distributions;
4. SIMs involve collective action;
5. SIMs are temporally limited and end by disappearance of institutionalization; and
6. SIMs can vary in scope and be either progressive or reactionary.

Frickel and Gross also outline key differences between SIMs and social movements: they suggest that SIMs are smaller than social movements, have narrow dynamics of limited relevance to the rest

of the population, have lower stakes that are primarily limited to professional consequences, lack public confrontations, and are generally lead by more high-status activists.

Frickel and Gross's model leads them to make four propositions about the nature of SIMs. First, they suggest that SIM emergence is made more likely by the development of complaints against "the central intellectual tendencies of the day" (209) by high-status intellectuals. Second, they suggest that SIMs will have greater impacts when they have access to greater resources via structural opportunities. These resources include, most fundamentally, jobs, prestige, and organization, (particularly a collectivist organizational and intellectual orientation). Third, SIMs will have greater impacts when they have access to sites for micromobilization, or meeting places to develop new network ties and recruit new scholar-activists to participate in the movement. Finally, SIM impacts depend on the use of frames that resonate with other intellectuals.

While this model comes close to proposing a social movements inspired understanding of disciplinary emergence, I believe it falls short for three main reasons. First, Frickel and Gross see the movement-like dynamics of the fields they study as confined to the politics of disciplinary emergence and growth, and not as part of the intellectual projects of the fields themselves. Second, Frickel and Gross limit their analysis to scientific fields. While they do occasionally draw upon examples in the humanities, such as anti-multiculturalism in the humanities curriculum and French social theory, they are explicitly concerned with the ways in which truth is determined empirically in academic analysis. This focus limits their ability to understand NKMs that challenge established "truths" themselves. Finally, Frickel and Gross do not explore the existence of countermovements, an exploration which can often serve to highlight the important movement characteristics of NKMs themselves (Bammer and Martin 1992).



While similarly limited to the production of scientific knowledge, the literature on social movements in health offers some keys to understanding NKMs. This literature shows how movements form around particular disorders or sites of inequality that are overlooked in the contemporary medical field. These movements are mobilized through collective identity which is created through common experiences in the world (Brown *et al.* 2004). They focus a considerable amount of energy on boundary work—between science and non-science, between good and bad science, between lay and expert roles, and between the movement and non-movement institutions (Brown *et al.* 2004).

Eyerman and Jamison's work takes on a much broader swath of social movement activity. They focus on large-scale movements for social and political change, many of them of the type that New Social Movements scholars would be concerned with, such as the civil rights movement and the environmental movement. But unlike most scholars of these movements, Eyerman and Jamison are explicitly concerned with the knowledge practices of these movements. They suggest, in fact, that it is through the creation of new knowledge “that a social movement defines itself in society” (Eyerman and Jamison 1991 55). To understand how this process occurs, Eyerman and Jamison develop a model of “cognitive praxis,” in other words the ways in which each movement's relations to the social, scientific, political, and natural world are articulated, practiced, and organized. Because Eyerman and Jamison believe that movements (and movement actors) seek to embody the ideals upon which they are based, movements thus become a way of translating theoretical ideas into social action.

The cognitive praxis model suggests that most (or maybe even all) social movements emerge from a foundation laid by intellectual work, generally work carried out by established intellectuals.

These intellectuals can draw upon their status and peer networks to create new spaces for debate that allow ideas to become familiar and useful to social movement actors. But Eyerman and Jamison suggest that these intellectuals tend to withdraw from participation in the contention that follows, thus leaving space for Gramscian organic intellectuals to arise within the social movement itself. These new intellectuals play a key role in popularizing the knowledge transformations that come to the fore in social movement activity, leading to longstanding changes in the knowledge environment as outcomes of social movements.

Eyerman and Jamison's model has much to add to our understanding of the knowledge practices of social movements, as the knowledge consequences of the social movements they discuss have been vitally important to societal transformations over the last century. However, their model is less helpful in understanding social movements that hold creating knowledge as a central goal rather than an auxiliary (even if deeply necessary) activity. In a way, NKMs may form the converse of the cognitive praxis model: in the cognitive praxis model, intellectuals create knowledge that aids in the creation of movements which transform knowledge. In NKMs, as this paper will demonstrate, movements create knowledge that in turn creates intellectuals.

### ***A Social Movements Theory of New Knowledge Movements***

For the purposes of this paper, I will adopt Amenta and Young's definition of social movements: "politically disadvantaged groups engaged in sustained collective action to secure their claims" (Amenta and Young 1999a 154). Though specific definitions of social movements do vary, there is general agreement about the three main elements of this definition—that social movements must engage in collective action, that this action must be directed towards some sort of goal or

goals, and that the social movement must consist of a group which is disadvantaged or excluded from the normal political process. It is important to note that the term “political” as employed in this paper is not limited to processes involving state actors. Rather, I use the term in the broader sense that refers to any relations involving power.

The SIMs that Frickel and Gross describe clearly do not fit into this model, because while they do engage in goal-oriented collective action, they consist of those who are very much a part of the political structure rather than being outside it. NKMs are also broader than SIMs in social significance and scope. And while I disagree with Frickel and Gross that social movements are always risky in nature, NKMs are more likely than SIMs to result in personal risk and visible confrontation, primarily because of their ties to broader societal movements and social change. For instance, compare the risks taken by NKM scholar-activists to participants in union movements in developed, democratic countries. Both types of activists face loss of jobs, careers, and salaries; and if they engage in disruptive action, both types of activists can face jail time and possibly physical violence. But neither is particularly likely to face the sorts of serious risks (death, for instance) that Frickel and Gross use to differentiate SIMs from social movements.

The NKM framework is not intended to replace the SIM model. Rather, the SIM model makes assumptions that knowledge-based movements are small and disconnected from other organized contention. For such movements, the SIM model seems quite appropriate. But in contrast to the SIM model, the NKM framework is thus designed to deal with disciplinary emergence as enacted through goal-oriented collective action engaged in by political and intellectual outsiders. I take a New Social Movements perspective on their nature and emergence. In other words, this paper will argue that unlike SIMs, NKMs emerge through the development of collective identities that are

disciplinarily meaningful. However, Frickel and Gross's perspective on those elements important to SIM impacts can be brought to bear, with some modification, on NKM impacts. And while the cognitive praxis model is useful for understanding those broader movements, it can not provide the tools for understanding movements specifically focused on knowledge creation.

A key difference between SIMs and NKMs is that SIMs are contained within the academic and intellectual sphere, while NKMs have strong connections to broader movements for social and political change (if they are not formally part of or allied with such movements). For NKMs, resources such as jobs, prestige, and organizational space are important, but so are the resources of student-body and community support. I would point out that while NKMs do tend, at some point in their lifespan, to at least attempt an entry into the academic sphere, they need not emerge from within academia. Alternative community settings, hobbyist and recreational practices, and other non-academic venues can provide the starting point. For instance, consciousness-raising rap groups were a vitally important emergence space for the nascent NKM of women's studies. Collectivist orientations are important and may even be more so than in the SIM model, given the lack of elite leadership. Micromobilization sites also remain important, but extend beyond the academic and workplace spheres into such sites as consciousness-raising groups and community centers. And framing remains significant, though it is less important that these frames resonate with uninvolved intellectuals and more important that they resonate with potential future constituencies, such as students, potential students, and funding providers.

As Frickel and Gross similarly observe about SIMs, NKMs are temporally bounded: they end either through death or through institutionalization. Institutionalization is an end to NKMs because scholar-activists begin playing the political game rather than engaging in outsider contention

(Meyer 1993). While it is often quite easy to see organizational death, it may be more difficult to detect when institutionalization has occurred. Starting from Edward Walker's three types of social movement institutionalization (Walker 2006), we can say that NKMs are politically institutionalized when they are formally incorporated into and funded by the organizational regimes of the university or of funding agencies. We can say that they are culturally institutionalized when their ideologies and practices become accepted within the academic and cultural spheres. And we can say they are organizationally institutionalized when they have developed formal communication and community structures, clear research agendas (Klein 1996), and a large percentage of organizationally institutionalized local bodies. In terms of the local bodies making up a discipline, NKMs can be said to be organizationally institutionalized when they are clearly departmental rather than interdisciplinary in structure; when curriculum is clear and coherent; when they have budgetary autonomy and discretionary funding; and when the department or its director retains control over hiring, tenure, and degree granting (Klein 1996; Teraguchi 2002).

## ***Methodology***

This paper utilizes a case study methodology. It will outline the history of Asian American studies and women's studies as NKMs through an analysis of sources (books, dissertations, and articles) that tell the stories of the disciplines themselves and their grounding in particular places. The texts I rely on can be considered both secondary sources and (in many cases) primary sources as well. They are texts that can be analyzed as social movement documents created by social movement adherents (in this case, students and scholars of the disciplines in question. While it is impossible to know if all available secondary sources have been covered, as no master list on the histories of the

disciplines exists (Lustick 1996), I have tried to include as many sources as I could find which deal explicitly with questions of discipline formation in general and in specific locations. It is vital to deal both with the founding and missions of disciplines because the intellectual projects of NKMs are tied both to their (activist) missions and to the circumstances of their founding (Schmitz *et al.* 2004).

I am not attempting to develop a causal explanation of movement formation or impacts here. Rather, I hope to develop a theoretical framework for assessing the social movement characteristics of NKMs. To do this, I will consider two somewhat similar cases of NKMs to assess the general applicability of the theoretical framework, as suggested by Valenzuela (1998).

### ***The New Knowledge Movement for Women's Studies***

The Free University of Seattle, a countercultural alternative education organization founded by University of Washington students, offered the first organized course focusing on a politically informed women's studies in 1965. By 1969, what is conventionally thought of as the founding point of women's studies as a field of academic inquiry, approximately sixteen women's studies courses were being offered in the United States (Klein 1996). These early courses were explicitly feminist courses taught by activist rather than academic women and were explicitly focused on "transforming the disciplines" and on dismantling "the boundary separating knowledge from action, discipline from politics" (Klein 1996 117-18). The first formal women's studies program was developed at San Diego State University in 1971 (Boxer 1998). By 1990, there were 520 organized programs in women's studies in the United States, including 235 majors, 404 minors, and well over 30,000 individual courses. Over two thirds of universities, half of four-year colleges, and a quarter of two-year colleges offered courses (Klein 1996). Women's studies has clearly become an institutionalized

part of American higher education.

The fact is, however, that women's studies did not merely assimilate to the university but, at least prior to institutionalization, challenged its fundamental organizational forms: the supremacy of disciplinary organization; the hierarchical and faculty-centered administrative style; the importance of traditional academic credentials; and the focus on rational, impersonal, non-emotive, and non-experiential learning. While the core goal of the women's studies NKM was clearly the development of new knowledge concerning the biological, sociological, psychological, literary, historical, and artistic experiences of women, other important goals of women's studies besides the academic and organizational ones noted above included the development of professional space for female intellectuals. Women's studies as an academic discipline generally following the standard academic disciplinary model can be seen as an "unintended consequence" (Amenta and Young 1999b) of the women's studies NKM. In other words, it remains important to differentiate the original movement-linked *project* of women's studies from the post-movement *reality* criticized by some contemporary reformers of women's studies (Wiegman 1999/2000).

The 1977 National Women's Studies Association Constitution outlined the goals of women's studies at a time when institutionalization was beginning but movement-based consciousness was still strong: "a vision of a world free not only from sexism, but also from racism, class-bias, ageism, heterosexual bias—from all the ideologies and institutions that have consciously or unconsciously oppressed and exploited some for the advantage of others" (NWSA 1977, as cited in Boxer 1982). Here, we can clearly see how the goals of the women's studies NKM were not the development of an institutionalized women's studies discipline but rather the emergence of an academy free of sexism.

This constitution is not only important as evidence of the early guiding principles of the women's studies NKM. It also marks the formalization of a set of informal networks and communication practices that had linked women's studies activists for the prior decade. Beginning with Florence Howe's series of publications entitled *Female Studies*, women's studies scholar-activists continually produced newsletters, broadsides, conferences, and other means of communicating with one another across North America and around the globe. These efforts helped scholar-activists keep up-to-date on the status of activities in distant places as they chose strategies for their own campaigns for women's studies in their own areas.

Given the beginnings of the women's studies NKM in a period of substantial social unrest, particularly within the academic sphere, women's studies scholar-activists often strategically took advantage of temporary openings in standard academic practice, such as the opportunity to build their own continuing education programs or offer new courses through experimental courses. By drawing on the support of women both within educational institutions and in the larger community beyond, women's studies scholar-activists were able to demonstrate significant support for their efforts through high enrollments and low-cost courses. Women's studies scholar-activists also took advantage of their strong connections to the broader women's movement to show the connections between women's studies and other forms of gender inequality, positioning women's studies as a way to address the historical exclusion of women from many aspects of higher education in general. Additionally, women's studies scholar-activists worked in the community, volunteering in social service agencies, making connections between the "new scholarship on women" (Maher 1993) and the experiences of ordinary women, and bringing their academic skills to "rap groups" to help women young and old contextualize their lives. This work within the community had the added



benefit of giving the women's studies NKM a new constituency, as many women learned through community work in women's studies that they could return to continue educations interrupted by marriage and childbearing—an opportunity realized in women's studies.

Theory and practice continue to inform one another within the discipline-movement of women's studies, something which can be seen in the continuing choice of women's studies programs to require service learning and internships from undergraduate majors. Scholar-activists say that “since ‘feminist activity made women's studies possible, women's studies must in turn make feminist activity possible’” (Kaye 1978, as quoted in Boxer 1982). Some scholars of women's studies and the history of the women's movement (Feldman 1982; McMartin 1993) have come to see women's studies as the “institutionalized arm” of the women's movement.

The women's studies NKM has not gone without criticism, particularly from groups that experienced exclusion during its history. In particular, lesbians and women of color have often found their voices silenced within that NKM, though more recently women's studies as a field has become somewhat more inclusive of their experiences. At the same time, the women's studies NKM has faced significant countermovement mobilization, primarily from backlash groups that want to privilege the traditional white male dominated canon over newer forms of knowledge (Yamane 2001). In fact, it is the countermovements which often provide the greatest support for our understanding of NKMs as movements (Bammer and Martin 1992)—for instance, Clark Kerr has ignored the role of identity-based studies in the contemporary higher education and academic spheres *because* he sees them as political rather than academic, professional, or vocational (Kerr 1995). As noted above, women's studies today has become significantly institutionalized in political, cultural, and organizational terms. In fact, some long-standing programs are beginning to move away

from the NKM's knowledge goals and shift their focus away from women in particular and towards gender in general. In fact, the institutionalization of women's studies has progressed to a point that new programs and courses that implicitly distance themselves from feminism may now be adopted at institutions of higher education that seek to be competitive for students and prestige without any attention to the NKM roots of the discipline. But on the other hand, knowledge about women does now have a place (even if only a small one) in many traditional disciplines.

### ***The New Knowledge Movement for Asian American Studies***

Asian Americans are not, as many people believe, a new immigrant group. There have been immigrants from the continent of Asia landing on United States shores since the 1700s (Takaki 1989). However, homeland politics, American racial classification practices, and immigration laws conspired to inhibit the formation of a group identity until after the relaxation of immigration restrictions in 1965 (Espiritu 1992). During the 1960s, many Asian American college students participated in the broader struggles for racial equality that were sweeping the nation and were confronted with their own lack of equality, conditioned in large part by the experiences of Japanese Americans who were interned during World War II (Takaki 1989). The development of Asian American studies was one of the earliest organized social movements around Asian American issues. The first Asian American studies program was established at San Francisco State College in the fall of 1969 as part of (and eventually the largest department in) the College of Ethnic Studies (Barlow and Shapiro 1971).

Unlike women's studies, Asian American studies has not yet become a truly institutionalized part of the academic landscape. In fact, though there are Ph.D.s granted in Asian American studies,

the Asian American studies NKM continues its efforts. The differences between the early mobilizations in California and the later ones throughout the United States that began in the late 1980s and continue today are sufficient to have resulted in somewhat of a rift within the interdiscipline of Asian American studies—scholars within the discipline talk of the “California model” and the “East of California model” (Sumida 1998). Indeed, the first program not on the west coast was founded at Bowling Green State University in Ohio in 1979 (Hu-DeHart 1993). As of 2001, there were at least 43 Asian American studies programs in the United States (Lim 2001). Where Asian American studies programs do exist, they often struggle with questions about their purpose and role within the higher education institution as they are asked to provide service courses to introduce expanding numbers of white students to multicultural and diversity issues (Chang 1999).

Because the Asian American studies NKM has experienced more geographical centralization than the women’s studies NKM, particularly in the earlier years of its existence, scholar-activists were often able to rely on local conferences and working groups to keep in touch with one another. Though these conferences were often focused on some issue of academic or community interest, many contained special workshops or panel discussions aimed at training new scholar-activists in the strategies of the NKM. Scholar-activists also focused energy on producing edited volumes and printed publications with the double purpose of communicating with other scholar-activists and providing explicitly political texts for the newly emergent courses in Asian American studies.

Like the women’s studies NKM, the Asian American studies NKM has had the production of knowledge about Asian American experience as its core goal. The scholar-activists of Asian American studies have challenged the notion of the Black-white racial binary and white supremacy

in the United States (Ijima 2001) and have worked to reclaim the lost history and literature of the earliest Asian immigrants. But also like women's studies, Asian American studies has sought to transform structures of higher education themselves. In particular, one goal has been transforming methods of assessment to make them "culturally relevant" (Teraguchi 2002).

In seeking to achieve these goals, Asian American studies scholar-activists have turned to a variety of strategic tools. Early in the NKM, they often built alliances with other ethnic studies NKMs (such as those for Black studies and Chicano/a studies) and launched concerted campaigns against individual institutions of higher education, campaigns that often involved student strikes, campus building occupations, or other highly contentious tactics. Contentious tactics have remained common, though more recently Asian American studies scholar-activists have been more likely to go it alone. Less contentious strategies have also been common, including the production of a variety of conferences and speakers' series that aim to disseminate Asian American studies knowledge to a broader audience in addition to work within Asian American communities outside of the academy that encourages the development of an authentic bottom-up form of knowledge and praxis.

Asian American studies scholar-activists have faced criticism from within the Asian American community for their greater focus on the experiences and needs of middle-class multi-generation Americans with ancestry in the East Asian countries of China, Japan, and Korea. In particular, South and Southeast Asians have noted their exclusion from the field, sometimes launching their own smaller NKMs in response. Additionally, poor and working-class Asian Americans have criticized the scholar-activists' focus on transforming knowledge rather than working to remedy objective social disadvantage. At the same time, Asian American studies continues to face a public which is unsure of its place in the academic sphere, often confusing it with

the institutionalized discipline of Asian studies, in an interesting variation on the “forever foreigner” stereotype often faced by Asian Americans (King 2000). But beyond these challenges, the Asian American studies NKM has faced two significant countermovements. The first is the anti-multiculturalism movement (Cope and Kalantzis 1997). Secondly, there has been active opposition from the faculty and students of entrenched ethnic studies or Africana/Black studies programs, either because these other programs do not see the need for Asian American studies or more often because of fears about competition for limited program funding (Barlow and Shapiro 1971). Though Asian American studies has become organizationally institutionalized and on a local level (particularly in California) politically institutionalized, the NKM is ongoing and cultural institutionalization has not occurred. New programs continue to form, and scholar-activists continue to push to correct the misconceptions about and absences of Asian Americans in the contemporary knowledge base.

## ***Discussion***

Both of the cases discussed above can be used to illustrate the general principles of the NKM framework. To begin with, they both clearly display a series of goals, core among them the development of new forms of knowledge, but extending beyond that goal and in fact including a commitment to collective intellectual work that helped spur the collectivist consciousness so important to movement impacts (Boxer 1982). They also both clearly consist of a set of political outsiders working collectively in pursuit of those goals: even today, women make up less than 40% of full-time faculty in higher education institutions and less than a quarter of full professors, while Asian Americans make up about six percent of both categories (The Chronicle of Higher Education

2005). These groups made up much smaller percentages of faculty, especially elite tenured faculty, as their respective NKMs began—leaving it up to graduate students and instructors without job security to offer the first courses and produce the first research (Shircliffe 1996; Winkler 1992). And despite the generally intellectual nature of NKMs, women’s studies and Asian American studies activists did face arrests and police violence during the sit-ins and other campus actions taken in furtherance of their goals (Shircliffe 1996).

In terms of emergence, both the women’s studies NKM and the Asian American studies NKM show the development of a coherent collective identity as a basis for mobilization. In fact, the same micromobilization contexts that later contributed to recruitment and network building—such as consciousness-raising rap sessions, community and women’s centers, and participation in prior social movement activities—helped to spur the development of the collective identity that gave rise to the NKM. In both cases, scholar-activists had access to important resources. These resources included the funding necessary to put together journals and publications; the organizational resources to hold conferences and build networks; the offer of jobs (even if temporary and part-time) teaching the new discipline to eager students; and the ongoing support and mobilization of these students as a constituency of the movement. However, it is unclear whether prestige was an important factor for these NKMs. As noted above, many early scholar-activists of women’s studies and Asian American studies were graduate students and part-time instructors without traditional academic credentials. Early courses were most often offered in experimental colleges or other less-prestigious institutions and parts of institutions, and early scholarly publications were generally published by small non-academic presses, often those focused specifically on activism.

The final element of the theoretical model is frame resonance. While space limitations

prevent this paper from delving fully into an analysis of the diagnostic and prognostic framing strategies undertaken by women's studies and Asian American studies scholar-activists, one way of testing frame resonance is to see to what extent potential students have been willing to enroll. While the measure utilized here is empirically a measure of discipline popularity rather than frame resonance and thus can not tell us how resonant the frames created by NKM scholar-activists have been, it is unlikely that students would choose to continue enrolling in academic courses which do not have immediately apparent vocational value and which are not required if they did not find the intellectual claims of such disciplines compelling.

Good data on the percentage of undergraduates who enroll in Asian American studies coursework are not available. However, of those who graduated from high school in 1992 and subsequently enrolled in at least 10 college credits, 19.5% of Asian American students took coursework in "ethnic/culture studies" before 2001 (Adelman 2004). It is also likely that at some percentage of the almost one thousand degrees conferred in unspecified ethnic and cultural minority studies may have been entirely or primarily Asian American studies courses as well. In comparison, only 16 degrees were conferred in Arabic language, 324 in astronomy, and 832 in all seven enumerated branches of genetics combined (National Center for Education Statistics 2003). Additionally, 12.7% of students those who graduated from high school in 1992 and subsequently enrolled in at least 10 credits of undergraduate coursework earned credits in women's studies before 2001, a higher number than take courses in such institutionalized fields as international relations, classics, or computer programming (Adelman 2004).

While some of these students did not persist beyond the first course in which they enrolled, some further information on frame resonance can be gleaned by looking at the number of student

who graduate with bachelors or graduate degrees in a discipline. In 2002-03, over one thousand degrees in women's studies and approximately 130 degrees in Asian American studies were conferred (National Center for Education Statistics 2003). It is also likely that some percentage of the almost one thousand degrees conferred in unspecified ethnic and cultural minority studies may have been entirely or primarily Asian American studies courses as well. In comparison, only 16 degrees were conferred in Arabic language, 324 in astronomy, and 832 in all seven enumerated branches of genetics combined (National Center for Education Statistics 2003). Given the differences between these two NKMs, particularly in terms of duration, extent, and the size of the potential constituencies, these numbers should not be interpreted as evidence of the comparative frame resonance of the NKMs. However, they do show that a significant number of students find the NKMs' frames resonant enough to pursue an education based on them.

## ***Conclusion***

The NKM framework proposed in this paper provides a new way to understand the role and formation of disciplines as change-agents in society. The scholar-activists who participated in these movements were hoping, as in Gramsci's conception, to create a counter-hegemonic intellectual field that could be the starting point of true social change. It is rare, of course, that NKMs truly reach their goals. However, they often do succeed in creating new intellectual spaces, professional opportunities, and cultural transformations in line with their intellectual programs.

The NKM approach offers significant advantages over prior frameworks for understanding the knowledge politics of social movements. Unlike SIMs, NKMs clearly fit into common definitions of social movements, and the NKM framework helps the analyst to see the nature of



contention that the NKM engages in as well as the strategic choices of establishment outsiders seeking to transform the knowledge relations of the world around them. The SIM model remains important in understanding the types of movements it is best suited to explain—attempts to create and transform knowledge that spring from within establishment intellectual communities—but the NKM framework provides the ability to analyze knowledge-based movements outside of that limited context. Though the cognitive praxis model does take contention and outside status into account, it focuses on broader social movements rather than those explicitly concerned with the transformation of knowledge. Here, the NKM framework provides a necessary addition by opening up our understanding of movements within the knowledge sphere.

“Disruptive, popular social movements were the keys to access and to the creation of curricula that spoke to the lives of a group previously excluded from higher education,” (Slaughter 1997), both in terms of admissions and in terms of visibility in the intellectual sphere. These movements are not only about institutionalizing an already-extant program of study, but also are themselves the creation-tools of new forms of knowledge. As Gramsci says, it is the creation of organic intellectuals within the oppressed group that would be “the starting point of critical elaboration...the consciousness of what one really is...” (Gramsci 1971 323). Foucault elaborates as well on the role of the intellectual in creating broader social change:

To say to oneself from the start, “What is the reform that I will be able to make?”—that’s not a goal for the intellectual to pursue, I think. His role, since he works precisely in the sphere of thought, is to see how far the liberation of thought can go toward making these transformations urgent enough for people to want to carry them out, and sufficiently difficult to carry out for them to be deeply inscribed in

reality.

It is a matter of making conflicts more visible, of making them more essential than mere clashes of interest or mere institutional blockages. From these conflicts and clashes a new relation of forced must emerge whose temporary profile will be a reform (Foucault 1994 457).

Audrey Lourde, in her famous essay “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House,” writes that people can not bring about genuine change (even if they can bring about temporary progress) by employing the methods of their oppressors (Lourde 1984). In a sense, this is true. Both the women’s studies and the Asian American studies NKMs have faced the dilution of their radical goals as they have been institutionalized into the higher education sphere. But if we look not at dismantling but rather at making an impact (Amenta and Young 1999b), we can see that these NKMs have created substantial change in the higher education landscape. No longer do publishers feel free to publish textbooks on marriage and the family without including attention to women’s issues (Komarovsky 1988), for instance. And most colleges and universities now include attention to the experiences of non-white and non-western peoples in their general education, history, or literature curricula. Many have instituted formal requirements for multicultural understanding (Yamane 2001). In fact, the very aspects of the contemporary women’s studies and Asian American studies disciplines that make their scholar-activists decry the death of their radicalism show us the true extent of their impact.

The NKM framework proposed in this paper provides a new way to understand the role and formation of disciplines as change-agents in society. The scholar-activists who participated in these movements were hoping, as in Gramsci’s conception, to create a counter-hegemonic intellectual

field that could be the starting point of true social change. It is rare, of course, that NKMs truly reach their goals. However, they often do succeed in creating new intellectual spaces, professional opportunities, and cultural transformations in line with their intellectual programs.

Women's studies and Asian American studies are only two examples of the NKM phenomena used here inductively to develop the theoretical framework I propose. I believe that this framework could be applied to the development of a variety of disciplinary stories, for instance Black studies, aboriginal studies, intelligent design, evolutionary biology, and environmental studies. I leave it to the future to test the framework on these (or other) cases.

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