

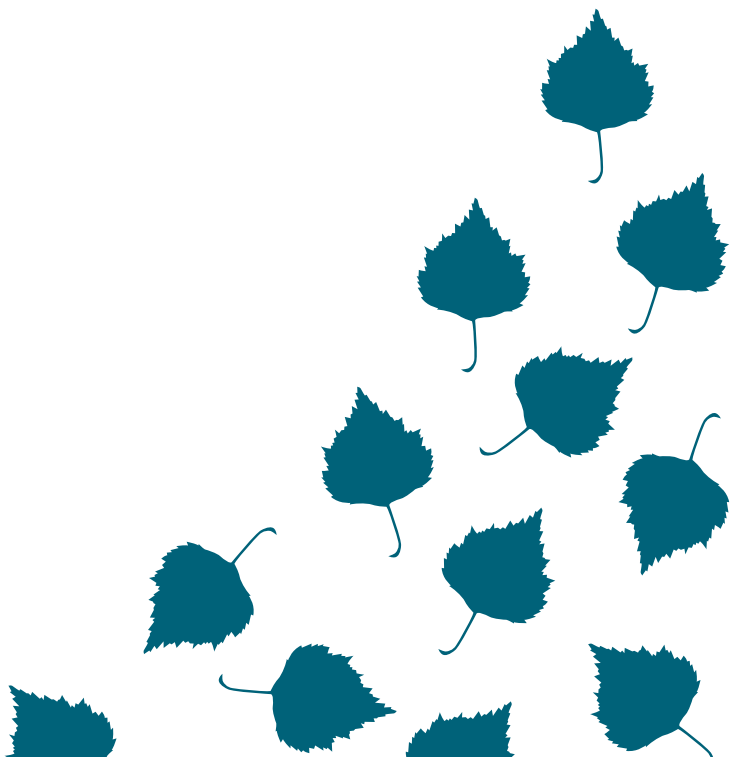
EKONOMI OCH SAMHÄLLE
ECONOMICS AND SOCIETY



HANKEN

THE POLITICS OF VALUE CREATION

MIKKO LAAMANEN



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Economics and Society

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Mikko Laamanen

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Key words: Value creation, collective action, conflict, strategic action fields, ethnography, labour movement

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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Studying the politics of value creation in collective action	4
1.2	Aim and problem	6
1.3	Contextualisation	9
1.4	Positioning the study	12
1.5	Structure of this dissertation	17
 PART I – GROUNDWORK		
2	PERSPECTIVES TO VALUE CREATION.....	22
2.1	Dissecting the contemporary literature on value creation.....	22
2.2	Individual–harmonious value creation	25
2.3	Collective–harmonious value creation	28
2.4	Individual–conflictual value creation.....	32
3	COLLECTIVE–CONFLICTUAL VALUE CREATION	34
3.1	Strategic action fields.....	38
3.2	Collective action	40
3.3	Practice theory	46
3.4	Collective–conflictual value creation framework.....	49
3.4.1	Actors	51
3.4.2	Interactions.....	52
3.4.3	Practices	52
3.4.4	Outcomes	53
 PART II – FIELDWORK		
4	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	56
4.1	Research philosophical assumptions in critical ethnography.....	57
4.2	Data collection.....	59
4.2.1	Interviews	61
4.2.2	Participant observation	63
4.2.3	Reflection on ‘doing’ abduction.....	65
4.3	Data analysis and presentation.....	67

5 UNDERSTANDING ORGANISED LABOUR	70
5.1 Labour movement, trade unionism and industrial relations	72
5.2 Institutions, relations, and practice repertoires	74
5.3 Union logics and models	81
6 UNIONISM AS COLLECTIVE ACTION	85
6.1 Organised labour in Finland	85
6.2 Field frames between solidarity and individualism	92
6.3 Strategising, servicing and organising a union	100
6.4 Summary of findings	104
PART III – HEADWORK	
7 THE THEORY OF COLLECTIVE–CONFLICTUAL VALUE CREATION	110
7.1 Actor-oriented premises	112
7.2 Interaction-oriented premises	112
7.3 Practice-oriented premises	114
7.4 Outcome-oriented premises	117
8 STUDY IMPLICATIONS AND EVALUATION	120
8.1 Theoretical implications	120
8.2 Empirical implications	123
8.3 Evaluation of rigour and ethics	125
9 CONCLUDING REMARKS	128
REFERENCES	130

APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Interview guide	159
Appendix 2	Interview request	160
Appendix 3	Evaluative criteria for critical theory.....	161
Appendix 4	Coverage and centralisation of collective bargaining.....	162
Appendix 5	Membership value in marketing	163

TABLES

Table 1	The variables of conflict (Deutsch, 1973, p. 5-7)	14
Table 2	Three foundational approaches to value creation literature	27
Table 3	Types of action challenging authority (adapted from Snow and Soule, 2010, p. 10)	42
Table 4	Conceptual framework of collective–conflictual value creation (adapted from Laamanen and Skålén, 2015, p. 394).....	50
Table 5	Field work phases and empirical material.....	60
Table 6	Interview details.....	62
Table 7	Focusing the collective–conflictual value creation framework.....	68
Table 8	Elements of union power (Lévesque and Murphy, 2010)	80
Table 9	Union logics and models	82
Table 10	Difference of servicing and organising (Organising Works, 1995 cited in Turnbull, 2003, p.504)	83
Table 11	Union strategy	101
Table 12	Premises of collective–conflictual value creation	111

FIGURES

Figure 1	Positioning the study.....	13
Figure 2	Theoretical assumptions towards the politics of value creation	16
Figure 3	Overview of the study.....	18
Figure 4	Mapping value creation literature	24
Figure 5	Theoretical foundation of collective–conflictual value creation.....	37
Figure 6	Actors, fields, and environments (Laamanen and Skålén, 2015, p. 386) .	39
Figure 7	Framing processes (adapted from Gahan and Pekarek, 2013, p. 759)	44
Figure 8	Knowledge paradigms (adapted from Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Murray and Ozanne, 1991)	58
Figure 9	Organisational structure	64
Figure 10	The abductive research process	66
Figure 11	Labour movement, trade unionism and industrial relations.....	73
Figure 12	Industrial relations field and environment	75
Figure 13	Conflict and collective action practice repertoires in IR (adapted from Salamon, 2000, p. 415)	78
Figure 14	Union power (adapted from Lévesque and Murray, 2010; Salamon, 2000).....	79
Figure 15	#STOP demonstration	89
Figure 16	Concurrent importance of unionisation (TSN Gallup, 2012).....	90
Figure 17	Opinions toward trade unions (TSN Gallup, 2015).....	91
Figure 18	Summary of the study findings	106
Figure 19	Frame dynamics and translation	116

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Akava	The Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland Akava (Korkeakoulutettujen työmarkkinakeskusjärjestö Akava)
CCT	Consumer Culture Theory
CDL	Customer-Dominant Logic
IR	Industrial Relations
EK	Confederation of Finnish Industries EK (Elinkeinoelämän keskusliitto EK)
GDL	Goods-Dominant Logic
LM	Labour Movement
SAF	Strategic Action Field
SAK	The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions SAK (Suomen ammattiliittojen keskusjärjestö)
SDL	Service-Dominant Logic
SL	Service Logic
SMS	Social Movement Studies
STTK	Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees STTK (Toimihenkilökeskusjärjestö STTK)
TSR	Transformative Service Research
TU	Trade Union
UF	Union Federation

1 INTRODUCTION

The classical marketing theory is a narrative of the individual – of a consumer or a provider – and of specific processes of how these two come together in exchange to meet their idiosyncratic needs rationally and guided by individual benefit. Marketing in its various guises can be understood to manage the mechanisms of exchange, such as the product or channels, or as pertaining to higher goals in terms of developing affective and behavioural bonds between the exchange partners. Ultimately, marketing can be considered the study of the nature, dynamics and outcomes of exchanged, created, and consumed value. Historically, these dynamics have been predominantly firm-centred, whereby marketing is considered a business function of creating and sustaining demand. With the emergence of customer-orientation in the writings of Theodore Levitt (1960), the way in which firms could escape the trap of obsolescence is by tuning into customer satisfaction and its dependence on the customers' evaluation on the quality of goods and services. Even relationships challenged the established preoccupation with developing goods ahead of the competition.

Later, Kotler and Levy (1969) argued that marketing transcends the boundaries of the commercial sphere and the measures related to tweaking satisfaction. Due to the nature of marketing as a 'pervasive social activity', it can be examined and implemented in other activities and spheres of life to 'serve the interests of particular groups' (Kotler and Levy, 1969, p. 15). Serving human and social needs is proposed through marketing as a functional set of activities and concepts. By effectively managing the offering, whatever its quality or nature – be it a service, person or (political, entertaining, educating) idea – human needs can be served over all spectrums of life. Richard Bagozzi (1975) argues that exchange in marketing is often indirect, may have intangible and symbolic properties and actors beyond the transacting dyad. Beyond materiality and the (ultimately) utilitarian nature of exchange, Bagozzi draws further attention to the temporal, symbolic and reciprocal characteristics of exchange. He asserts that the assumption that marketing is based on the *quid pro quo* principle does not necessarily hold true for various generalised, or mediated, complex systems of exchange. Bagozzi is in effect introducing a systemic view that includes various actors engaged in a networked exchange with social, as well as economic, dimensions and outcomes.

Further, in Johan Arndt's (1983) political economy approach, the dominant microeconomic paradigm based on rationality, controllability and harmony should be extended at the conjunction of economic, political and social forces that affect behaviour in exchange systems. Such systems consist of political coalitions influenced by internal and external forces with common and conflicting goals. Arndt asserts that the function of marketing within this framework is to work out acceptable exchange ratios for the stakeholders involved by analysing the environment, polity (i.e. the internal and external politics) as well as the internal and external economic relations. Arndt's paradigmatic assumptions relate to considering the systemic and temporal organisation of exchange with its technical, economic, social, emotional, informational and competence characteristics. Unlike the microeconomic view to marketing that rests on controlling product variables such as price and availability, the political economy paradigm elaborates the interplay of power and conflict struggles in the context of internal and external structures. For Arndt (1983), the promise of the political economy paradigm rests in the capacity to build *positive theories* in marketing, that is, such that describe what is rather than what should be.

Nevertheless, the individualised narrative that still dominates much of marketing literature, amongst others, the literature in value creation. Theorising value creation in marketing has proliferated over the past decades with several connected, yet different streams of theory existing in parallel. Differentiating these approaches are, for instance, the question which actor is the most central, what the role of goods and service(s) is, how contexts and environments exert influence, what type of managerial (sometimes also social) phenomenon is theorised, and most importantly, who creates value and how. The most prominent concurrent approach is the *service-dominant logic* (SDL), which endeavours a macro-level analysis of economics and society (Lusch and Vargo, 2014; Vargo and Lusch, 2004, 2008 2016). SDL is framed in five axioms and eleven foundational propositions that outline the nature of actors, resources, service and value of this paradigm shift in the logic of marketing and exchange (Vargo and Lusch, 2016). While initially dyadic in its orientation, recently developments in the SDL literature have taken on theorising value in larger social systems. Redefining their original thesis on the nature of service-dominant logic, Vargo and Lusch (2008, p. 5) situate value creation in the interaction and exchange between economic and social actors within, across and through networks and service systems. Service systems then are dynamic configurations of actors and resources of value creation that further share stabilising institutional logics and institutional arrangements (Lusch and Vargo, 2014; Vargo and Lusch, 2016).

The individualised nature of SDL becomes clear in the fourth axioms/tenth foundational premise of service-dominant logic, whereby ‘value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary’ (Vargo and Lusch, 2008, p. 9; Williams, 2012). This idea, presented in the follow-up piece of their 2004 article, has become accepted as the creed (indeed, a dominant logic) for breaking loose of the goods-dominant logic with its firm-centricity and embedded value in goods. The goods-dominant logic is highly reminiscent of the object of critique by Levitt, Kotler, Levy, Bagozzi and Arndt presented above. Customer experience as the glorified fundament (axiom) of value is not without its problems, especially when digging deeper into the philosophical foundations value creation literature draws from. The value concept as such has pronouncedly historical roots in philosophical, sociological and economic studies (see Marx, 2013 and Smith, 2015; in marketing, Brown, 2007; Ramírez, 1999). Value has been used in theorising the generation and distribution of benefit and (economic) wealth and its impact on social dynamics and order (cf. Baudrillard, 1998; Beamish, 2007). The former has been particularly central to management literature, which draws from these historical discussions to make sense of organisational and market behaviours. Neoclassical economics, with its focus on supply and demand, has had a distinctive impact on understanding value and its creation in market exchange and relationships. Where Fisk and his co-authors (1993) discussed value creation as a future orientation in the early nineties, it is a fairly recent development that concepts, such as exchange and use value, have gained centrality in the mainstream marketing discourse as well as in culturalist approaches and service marketing (Karababa and Kjeldgaard, 2014; Lusch and Vargo, 2014; Vargo et al., 2008). Sources of value have been sought dichotomously – from the consumer perspective as well as from the service provider’s – in exchange, and later, in use.

While recent developments in theorising value creation have extended the scope and context by zooming out and opened the possibility for a socio-political analysis of actor to actor interaction (Saren, 2015), the tenets of value creation as a political, collective and conflictual enterprise are still nascent. Developing there requires critiquing the individualised narrative, but also the general assumption of benefit in exchange shared by SDL and other approaches in the value creation literature; an assumption that has remained ontologically unchallenged (cf. Peñaloza and Venkatesh, 2006). Accordingly,

the present-day marketing myopia appears as the sustained fetishism of individualisation and harmonisation of value and its creation. If, for Levitt (1960), the blind-sightedness of marketing was not understanding customer needs, the subjective experience of value created in mutually beneficial, quasi-symbiotic systems appear integral to current understanding on value and its creation. The latter focus illustrates that there certainly is an increasing progression toward collective – systemic outlooks in value creation, and the communal and societal impacts of marketing have been important aspects of consumption and consumer culture theories as well as macro-approaches to marketing. Yet, there is still ample room for extending the theorisations of value creation and its social and political dynamics and impacts, in particular.

The dissertation at hand critically examines and contributes to the value creation literature by bringing a perspective of collective action to the fore. Taking a social movement theory informed collective action approach leads, quite unsurprisingly, to an examination of conflict (such as disharmony, authority and domination). Here, aligned with Arndt's political economy approach, conflict encompasses the dynamics of human collective sociality, appearing where individuals with incongruent worldviews and practice repertoires organise, come into contact and interact. These are, on the one hand, the joint and conflicting interests of the collective actors, and the role of institutional logics and collective meanings. On the other, it accounts for the actors' agency in forming, mediating and challenging structures, positions and practices in value-creating contexts. In this work, I will deconstruct value creation literature by clustering it into *individual–collective* and *harmonious–conflictual* dimensions. The *individual–collective* division examines the question of whether the processes and outcomes of value creation are related to individual or singular relationships, or how these are shared in a larger context and amongst several actors. The central issue to the *harmony–conflict* division is the problematisation of mutual benefit, and it also tackles the question of whether value creation is perceived to and actually has universally favourable implications to all participating actors. The subsequent categorisation to be discussed shows general tendencies and similarities related to the scale and dynamics, as well as processes, outcomes and beneficiaries, of value creation.

Collective action, as understood in this dissertation, works towards social change, rather than individual benefit. Collective action necessitates social organisation through which participants of a cause connect and generate identities and boundaries locally and within larger structures of the society. Collective action is the nexus between actors and contexts and exists on the trajectory of agency and structure – it is not only what an actor is, but the epitome of engagement and embeddedness, inclusion and access to a set of (collective) resources. In this way, collective action functions as the basis for an alternative way of conceptualising value-creating activities, processes, relationships and outcomes between actors as well as domination and change in social settings. In what follows, I will illustrate what the study of the politics of value creation in collective action implies.

1.1 Studying the politics of value creation in collective action

[T]his is what politics is always ultimately about: not just to accumulate value, but to define what value is, and how different values (forms of “honor,” “capital,” etc.) dominate, encompass, or otherwise relate to one another; and thus at the same time, between those imaginary arenas in which they are realized. In the end, political struggle is and must always be about the meaning of life. (Graeber, 2013, p. 228)

Any social organisation of value creation is and should be conceptualised as inherently political; yet, as I will argue, contemporary marketing theories of value still struggle to fully grasp the nature of such politics. Following Graeber’s (2013) idea that value is political not only in its creation, but in relating, contesting and settling it in the wider social arenas and within the human existence, I suggest that value creation is ultimately *collective action*. What collective action means, then, needs to be defined. The way in which social movement researchers (and I) choose to believe, collective action is concerned with the change-oriented and conflict-bound joint action that emerges from the intricate dynamics of individuals, their organisations, ideas, and events unfolding over time (Della Porta and Diani, 2006; Snow et al., 2004b). Collective action exemplifies how groups form and act around collective identities and institutions, and work together towards shared goals and against common enemies. Essentially, collective action is organised towards engendering, thwarting or undoing societal order (such that exists on markets and the political arena) and its accompanying value(s).

There are some examinations of the ‘dark side’ of value creation. These elaborate on the destructive and opportunistic facets of interaction as well as situations, where actors may lose more than they gain. Alternatively, actors’ practices, processes, gains and losses are collectively negotiated and contested – that is, collectively arbitrated. This is where collective action, illustrating collective and conflictual properties of understanding and doing, becomes productive as a departure from the previous approaches. Collective action stands for the collaborative pursuit of a common objective through action to achieve a goal, which would not be obtainable through individual activity (Snow et al., 2004b; see also Olson, 1971). Action can be institutionally sanctioned or illicit. Such action often takes place in social movements, as a particular form of social organisation embedded in some form of social conflict, or ‘...in the co-existence of *contrasting value systems and of groups in conflict* with each other’ (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p. 13, emphasis added). These are networks of actors with common understandings of ‘being part of the same side in a social conflict’ (Diani, 1992, p. 2) and sharing resources and skills (Diani, 1992, 2003).

Central theoretical streams in social movement studies explore resource mobilisation, the structures of political opportunities and the creation of identity and meaning (Della Porta and Diani, 2006; McAdam, 2007; Snow and Soule, 2010). Resource mobilisation and approaches to political opportunities provide structural explanations that elaborate the availability and cost of material and immaterial resources and the openness of the political landscape to voicing of dissent, respectively. The creation of identity and meaning as a means of collective action refers to the cultural mechanisms employed to inform and incite action in others. All of the above frameworks explain the strategic and tactical practices available to movements that aim to maintain or challenge some existing structure or established authority (Snow and Soule, 2010). Authority structures further illustrate how collective action is conceptualised to take place in politicised landscapes, where power is asymmetrically distributed, ultimately leading to conflict and the experience of injustice.

It should be noted, that the collectivity¹ should not be used as a shorthand for a technical system for production and provisioning. A collectivity is also an adaptive social system making efforts to survive in a mutable environment (Della Porta and Diani, 2006; Scott, 2004). Cultural, economic and political effects, such as the changes in what is socially/commonly valued, may become less accepted, thereby hindering or ceasing a collective activity. For instance, political changes make hinder or enable how activities develop, and movement organisations are more or less strategic in their attempts to reach these goals (Meyer, 2007). Shared meanings and identity, resources and skills amalgamate actors in the desideratum of collective goals ‘that cannot be privatized to any of the members of the collectivity on behalf of which collective action has taken place’ (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p. 19). Individual agency may be restricted by the form that social organisation and collective practices take. On the one hand, as opposed to the above view, collectivities can become tyrannical to their constituent members or come to serve only particular participants’ purposes (e.g. Michels, 1965).

On the other hand, experiences are socially embedded to such extent, that it may not be possible to conceive individuals independent from social and collective influences and processes. In marketing literature on value creation, a distinction is made between the procedural and consequential nature of value or between the process and the outcome of value creation. Yet, whether the creation of value takes place collaboratively, collectively, discordantly or otherwise is questioned less frequently. The major impetus behind writing this dissertation is the blackboxing of the value creation process that can have an appearance of mutually benefit, while in reality, both the interactions and the outcomes may be a compromise following conflict, contestation and domination. This comes visible when problematizing value creation processes and the individualistic-experiential view on outcomes. Rather than linear, these are intertwined and co-constructive.

While the unique and phenomenological determination of value ‘seems to be a simple fact ... [as] value is not fixed, in the sense of being objective and immutable’ (Williams, 2012, p. 476) ... ‘the (putative) fact that value is co-created by two actors does not imply that one of them is the sole arbiter of value’ (Williams, 2012, p. 478). Indeed, ‘our wants and pleasures have their origin in society; we therefore measure them in relation to society; we do not measure them in relation to the objects which serve for their gratification ... [and] since they are of a social nature, they are of a relative nature’ (Marx, 1847 quoted in Laamanen and Skålen, 2015, p. 395). Thus, ‘[i]nsofar as value is social, it is always a comparison; value can only be realized in other people’s eyes. Another way to put this is that there must always be an audience’ (Graeber, 2013, p. 226). The collective-conflictual value creation illustrates the social processes influenced by the set-up and social context of their location (the field), the agency and strategic action of its actors and the environments as the participant audiences.

Certainly, this collective and conflictual approach follows a lineage in marketing literature. Early approaches to the political economy of networks and value constellations (Arndt, 1981, 1983; Håkansson, 2015; Normann and Ramírez, 1993; Normann, 2001; Thorelli, 1986) illustrate the political and structural dynamics of market institutions and interactions. Similarly, literature on consumption and consumer activism (i.a. Cova and Paraque, 2012; Dalli and Corciolani, 2008; Kozinets and Handelman, 2004; O’Guinn and Muñoz, 2005; Varman and Belk, 2009; Wahlen and Laamanen, 2015) portrays politics embedded in contentious and collective activities on

¹ Throughout this study I use the concept collective in the adjective sense of referring to something pertaining to or shared by a group, whereas collectivity denotes the collective as a whole. Thus, collectivity is used as a noun for the group.

the marketplace. Drawing from this heritage and connecting with recent literature on theorising social action in fields, this dissertation conceptualises collective–conflictual value creation as taking place between collectively organised actors – incumbents and challengers – within a larger social context – fields. Different, conflictual interests and goals emerge in field interaction and, as is the focus here, through strategic practice. As such, collective–conflictual value creation is understood as being dependent on a structural set-up of fields and environments (cf. Arndt, 1983; Thorelli, 1986), but also (trans)formed through actors’ agency, social skill and collective action practices. Laamanen and Skålén (2015, p. 395) conceive conflict spearheading innovation, which leads to field transformation and repositioning of the field, actors’ positions within it and future value creation (cf. Vargo and Lusch, 2016).

I will build on and empirically extend the conceptual framework for collective–conflictual value creation presented by Laamanen and Skålén (2015). In their article, Laamanen and Skålén (2015) draw on economic sociology and especially on a recent theory of strategic action fields (SAF; Fligstein and McAdam, 2011, 2012). By introducing a critical take on the collective, the developed framework is an attempt to bridge the divide between the procedural and consequential foci of value creation theory as well as widen the perspective of contexts where value creation takes place. Further, I will illustrate how common ideology and values drive socialisation, and incite and legitimise collective action. Value creation is presented as a collective effort in a social context characterised by colliding interests, struggles over position and conflictual practices. In particular, the roles of the parties involved in these processes are not perceived as equal, nor the interactions mutually beneficial. To illustrate this, I draw on the previously discussed social movement theory and theories of collective action. Research on collective action seeks to answer questions related to who organises collective action, who partakes and where, when and why collective action takes place. These simple, yet deceptively broad issues encompass goals, motivations, activity repertoires, events and temporalities as well as bring attention to issues and targets of action.

A politicised process of value creation has different outcomes, which do not necessarily follow the service marketing canon that value is created in and with mutual benefit in mind (see e.g. Thorelli, 1986). Similarly, as classical institutional theory is entering value creation discourse (cf. Vargo and Lusch, 2016), further cementation of a focus on stability and isomorphic behaviours may ensue limiting the ability of our theories to portray agency, domination, and conflict. Consequently, I argue that the theory needs to consider institutions and their logics in a less monolithic manner, as having the potential of radical change (cf. newer strands of institutional theorising; e.g. Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006; Lounsbury, 2005). Conflict dynamics are part and parcel of an approach to the politics of value and its creation (Corvellec and Hultman, 2014; Safri, 2014; Trompette, 2013).

1.2 Aim and problem

The various sociological approaches to collective action and their assumptions of social exchange and interaction in organised and institutionalised settings can extend the current efforts to theorise value and its creation in marketing. Politics of value creation addresses conflicts over value – what is valuable, how it should be created, and how it can be evaluated – within and between collectivities. Politics of value creation provides an alternative analytic stance that can be examined as the dynamic collective actions that, at times, are in conflict to those of other groups.

A politically sensitive analysis intends to reveal not only how value creation is settled and institutionalised (e.g. through shared practice and common logics), but also, how it is contested whereby meanings, resources and skills are utilised to resist or encroach a particular social order of value creation. Consequently, the aim of this study can be formulated in the following way.

The aim of this dissertation is to critically illustrate the politics of value creation through theorising collective and conflictual elements of value creation

As I will illustrate later, while studies in marketing may consider value from either collective or conflictual purviews, a synthesis of these perspectives is yet to emerge. The strategic action fields approach I both draw from and further elaborate in this dissertation establishes an explicit approach to theorise the collective and conflictual elements of value creation. Here, the politics of value creation entail collectively organised actors and their differing understandings, interests, and goals for action and the future. In their interaction, actors consequently encounter conflict. The central actors – *incumbents and challengers* – construct a field that is further influenced by authorities, as well as environments. Authorities and environments can both spark and dampen conflict through their actions making the ‘shocks to the system’ both internal and external of origin. When conflict challenges stability, it leads to an alteration of the actors’ positions and innovation, ultimately settling a new relational equilibrium – *social order* – which is ‘the totality of what produces stable conditions for the privileged and not-so-privileged groups in society’ (Fligstein, 2001a, p. 30).

The theory of strategic action fields draws from work by sociologists Neil Fligstein and Doug McAdam (2011, 2012; Fligstein, 2001b, 2013; McAdam and Scott, 2005). With reference to Giddens, Bourdieu, and institutional theory, Fligstein and McAdam (2011, 2012) theorise how stability and change emerge in fields, whereby their vantage point is skewed towards explaining the latter. A strategic action field (SAF) is the ‘social arena where something is at stake and actors come to engage in social action with other actors under a set of common understandings and with a set of resources that help define the social positions in the field’ (Fligstein, 2013, p. 40). Central here are the resources, common (yet, not necessarily consensual) understandings, social (power) positions and something hanging in the balance. The stability or fragility of the field and its relations relates to the distribution of resources, actors’ social skill and jockeying of position and the meanings and institutions created around the dynamics and common purposes of the field (Fligstein, 2013). SAF theory as the basis for the collective–conflictual framework will be discussed more in depth in chapter 3.1.

While being the object of study of conflictual collective action, politics of value as a perspective further problematizes the fundamental assumptions of extant literature in which congruous value creation between willing actors creates stable systems, such as resource-sharing networks, value chains and markets. In this view, any conflict would be self-correcting and tend toward harmonious equilibrium. This may hold true when it concerns the outcomes of field relations, but does not make processes and practices of authority and domination explicit. Collective action addresses the general paucity towards examinations of value creation becoming constructed and influenced by conflictual practices; how individuals, organisations, institutions interact in contested and dynamic social arrangements; how conditions and opportunities are strategised, and how practices of collective action lead to particular outcomes.

Given how value creation emerges as a blackboxed process, sources of conflict and instability must have an equally valid claim to problem status. Such a problematisation approach can be utilised as a method of critical imagination towards an alternative perspective to and interpretation of current theory (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2014; MacInnis, 2011; Sandberg and Alvesson, 2011). The commercially embedded theorisations of value and value creation underscore its emergence through consumption and utilise the relational dyad, as well as managerial implications, as the dominant frameworks for describing value creation (Grönroos, 2011; Vargo and Lusch, 2004, 2008). While examinations of complexity, ambiguity and considerations of multiple levels of aggregation have been called for (Gummesson, 2008; Gummesson et al., 2010; Layton, 2011; Vargo, 2009), previous research provides few explicit concepts and frameworks to study the dynamics related to collective action and conflict in value creation.

An illustration of the politics of value creation requires extending the focus on subjective or phenomenological evaluation of use-value in the service system to political dynamics, created in opposition or in reaction to something, uncovering and illustrating inequalities in value-creating relationships. Two research questions are set to accomplish this:

RQ1: How do the politics of value creation broaden the current theory of value creation?

RQ2: What is the nature of the collective and conflictual elements of value creation, and how do these emerge in context?

The first question addresses the lacunae in the literature in how it generally sparsely treats disharmony (cf. Echeverri and Skålén, 2011 and Laamanen and Skålén, 2015), by introducing and theorising the impact of conflictual social dynamics and incompatible collective orientations towards stability and change (see Fligstein, 2013; Fligstein and McAdam, 2012). This, as understood in this dissertation, is the gist of what politics of value creation is. Considering how value creation is collectively enacted, the question also addresses regimes of value both in terms of context and actor relations (see Arnould, 2014 and Corvellec and Hultman, 2014) that guide contextual dynamics.

The second question approaches the general mechanism of value creation, particularly its organisation, mobilisation and reproduction. Inquiry into this question instantiates how varieties of value are created in multiple actors' practices (see Karababa and Kjeldgaard, 2014), but further elaborates on how value is routinely understood. Given that social practices constitute social life (Shove et al., 2012), a practice approach can illuminate the dynamics of value creation activities and their political, social, cultural and economic dimensions at the intersection of value regimes (Arnould, 2014; Corvellec and Hultman, 2015; also institutional logics in SDL, see Lusch and Vargo, 2014; Skålén and Edvardsson, 2016). Value regimes intersect in social settings – here, fields – that are also the loci of the actors' interactions and determine the actors' positions and nature of interaction vis-à-vis one another. For instance, collaboration and coercion in interaction and whether practices uphold and contest the stability of a field and its dominant logic address concerns on the processual and outcome nature of value creation (cf. Gummerus, 2013).

There is a connection to a neoliberal narrative in the general avoidance of engaging with the politics of value creation. Benevolence and the equality of market exchange can certainly be challenged as a neoliberal fallacy, the extension of which can be found in theorisations of marketing that often play down the conflictual dynamics of market(ing) relationships seen to serve individuals' needs of self-actualisation and distinction at a profit. This turns a blind eye to the costs of production and problems to the collective, public good. Neoliberalism individualises and decollectivises the human condition and experience: the emergence of a neoliberal subject – a *homo economicus* – leads to the lessening of membership, communality and solidarity (Amable, 2011; Putnam 2000; Read, 2009), that is, participation and identification with other members of one's own group and other groups, and forging of internal and external ties through commonalities of goals, identities, meanings and action. Hunt and Benford (2004, p. 439) illustrate how the construction of internal and external forms of solidarity depend on a common understanding (framing) of worldviews and ideologies: 'a sense of loyalty and emotional interest ... [that] the well-being of the group and/or the well-being of members of the group are of such a concern that potential threats or opportunities to advance that well-being will produce nearly unqualified participation'.

The ongoing hegemony of the neoliberal ideology, its theory and practice has changed many conventions and relational dynamics of the various institutional contexts of the capitalist economy. Yet, collective action in resistance of neoliberalism and its market-based subjectivities enables such things as consumer activism, anti-consumption movements and other consumption critical collectivities that resist neoliberal developments (e.g. Kozinets and Handelman, 2004; Varman et al., 2011; Wahlen and Laamanen, 2015). Beyond the consumer culture, the civil society and its organisations can be used as fertile contexts of value creation research. For the purposes of a holistic perspective on collective activities and their environments and considering their complexity, the context of empirical research needs clear delineation. Boundary-making is necessary in field analysis. As fields are nested in one another, their number increases with the extension of each hierarchical order: 'the possibility for collective strategic action in modern societies is endless and the number of such fields may be impossible to estimate' (Fligstein, 2013, p. 41). This contextualisation is discussed next.

1.3 Contextualisation

Various contexts can be analysed from a collective and conflictual perspective. As mentioned above, a central issue is that the actors form a collectivity, considered in the context of their interaction and practices and in connection to the outcomes they wish to attain. The idea of what is good collectively and societally is mainly left outside the current discussion and understanding of the potentiality of a public good to exist on a scale of benefit, and detriment is generally overlooked (cf. Hirschman, 1970). For instance, international arms trade certainly raises questions about the beneficiaries of exchange and value creation. How resource spill over, and the way in which resources connect actors to yet other actors (Lusch and Vargo, 2014, p.71) gain macabre connotations in such a context. While SDL considers a spillover as a positive effect of value creation, moral responsibilities and externalities to societal stakeholders are generally neglected (cf. Lacznik and Murphy, 2012; Mick, 2007).

In this work, I will examine the organisation of labour in society and particularly the labour movement as a field challenger. As I will argue here, whilst being an unconventional application of value creation literature in the field of marketing, the labour movement highlights an informative case for a social movement network engaged

in social and economic exchange with its discordant real-life dynamics. The labour movement is an old social movement², and one of the prototypical activist movements in the contemporary civil society. The questions of whether and how the labour movement creates or destroys economic value for industries and societies have long been the quintessential issue in industrial economics and industrial relations (Freeman and Medoff, 1984; Turnbull, 2003). This discussion is largely based on macro-economic calculations of labour relation rigidity and the potential impact for employment, industry profits and international competitiveness. From a labour movement perspective, value creation is an ideologically guided activity that addresses the local everyday issues of working life as well as the aforementioned social, political and economic debates. The value of collective action in unions is created by improving the work and everyday life conditions for those organised, but also more proactively, by helping those generally at lower strata of society and work organisations in solidarity. These grand value propositions can be attained in these particular ways: through servicing and organising models that rest on divergent views on interactions and practices and entail different forms of value to the participants.

The servicing model is a union production process, where services, representation and benefits (e.g. hours, holidays and pay rises) are the essence of the union product. The organising model establishes collective processes and relies on rank-and-file empowerment. It focusses on membership self-organisation and balancing top-down organising and rank-and-file mobilising. Balancing these strategies is one central value creation dilemma for unions. On the one hand, while servicing can provide relative numbers of representation and union power, as well as labour market security for the members, it can lead to fickle 'consumerist' memberships that are difficult to mobilise. Organising approaches, on the other hand, require extended grassroots efforts and some resources to maintain. Here, issues of local and organisational conflict can be central to the union value creation practice, whereas the membership might have difficulties with the politicised nature (militancy) of the organising model. Union models and relations are further discussed in chapter 5.

Union power to act 'is at the core of current debates over the future of trade unionism' (Lévesque and Murray, 2010, p. 334). The power to act particularly relates to mobilising resources in a traditionally conflictual domain. The conflict here emanates from the positions the labour market actors occupy in relation to one another and their differing interests (Crouch, 1982; Kaufman, 2004; Poole, 1981; Salamon, 2000). The key relation is the employment relation between the employer and the employee (the buyers and sellers of work), but labour relations extend beyond this dyad when examined from the perspective of capital and labour as classes (or groups), which comprise industries, employer combinations, trade unions and others, who, through their locations in the exchange and given their diverging interests, are in collaboration and conflict. The employers' value-creating interests clash with those of the unions, and are further related to government action and larger societal environments. Capitalism forms the foundations of the organising principles and concepts as well as is the *raison d'être* for different groups. From a sociological standpoint, all economic relations are relations between people and are embedded in constructed social and legal institutions.

² Old social movements are said to differ from new social movements. New social movements are theorised as mobilised around '...race, ethnicity, youth, sexuality, countercultures, environmentalism, pacifism, human rights' (Buechler, 2007, p. 3208) and other similar issues instead of class-politics of old, Marxist social movements such as the labour movement. As will be shown later in this dissertation, the contemporary labour movement is learning from new social movements both in content and practice, and thus, the designation of the old social movement is to refer mostly to the longevity of the workers' struggle.

Portrayals of unions in marketing research are few, and when they appear, it is normally as a contextual variable to market performance (that is, the traditional guise of a hindrance to management/business performance; cf. Liewendahl, 2014) or a relic of a goods-dominant organising (Lusch and Webster, 2011). Cross-fertilisation of marketing theory, labour movement studies and studies in industrial relations may be controversial, and academic work here is scant (for exceptions, see Bailey et al., 2010; Gilson and Spencer, 1987; Laamanen, 2013); yet, the approach is relevant in highlighting applicability³ of value creation literature in larger theorisation of societal exchange, and also for elaborating on the practices and outcomes of meaning creation work and union organising in the sociological literature on trade unions.

For these reasons, I will examine the labour market as a locus of conflict emanating from different value regimes of neoliberal labour productivity and labour solidarity (cf. Harvey, 2005). Further localisation is within the labour movement and trade unions, one of the key stakeholders in the labour market. Trade unions represent membership-based collectivities engaged in collective action practices that produce identities, meaning and solidarities, but services as well. Therefore, organisationally, different value regimes centralising either service provision or collective mobilisation and societal change can clash. Trade unionism is examined as representative of a setting where value creation is not only central (see e.g. Olson, 1971), but also illustrative of the conceptualised collective and conflictual elements. Further delineation is made during fieldwork conducted in the Finnish labour movement and one particular trade union organisation.

Empirically, I will look at the societal and collective contexts of the Finnish labour movement. To connect these different levels of inquiry, I used SAF to understand social organisation and social ordering in value creation (Fligstein, 2001a, 2013). In the social context, meaning-making – that is, how unionism is framed, and subjectivities and labour movement affiliations are formed under neoliberal regime – relates to collective action. This illuminates why union membership is quintessentially a strategic issue in the field of labour relations. On the organisational level, I zero in on the strategic and everyday practices of unionism in a particular union organisation to illustrate the socially shared knowledge and meaning as the vehicles of activity and social order.

A theoretical contribution to marketing comes from treating value creation as collective and discordant. To this end, the framework discussed in this dissertation in both theoretical and empirical terms shows an alternative view departing from value as subjective, experiential and associated with positive practices and outcomes. The approach reconnects with earlier theorisations (Arndt, 1981; Normann, 2001) and responds to calls for holistic approaches (e.g. Askegaard and Linnet, 2011; Peñaloza and Venkatesh, 2006) that theorise contestation in value-creating systems (Corvellec and Hultman, 2014; Frow et al., 2014; Laamanen and Skálén, 2015). While what follows is generally more theoretically inclined, it is informed by an empirical examination. My study also has some implications beyond just establishing a novel stream of value creation theorising. Social movement theorists and studies in organisation of social movements often neglect the strategic nature of practice (e.g. Meyer, 2007). Looking at strategies and set goals, ways of organising and the politico-economic context with a value creation practice lens generates a contribution also towards sociological literature.

³ If not novelty; the institutional economist Mancur Olson in the book *The Logic of Collective Action* (1971) used the labour movement as a representative case for organisational work and individual engagement in creating value.

1.4 Positioning the study

To understand collective and conflictual dynamics of value creation, I adopt a multidisciplinary, exploratory approach. Beyond theories in marketing, I draw from various theories of collective action from the fields of SMS, organisation theory, critical management studies, and economic sociology. I identify with critical approaches to marketing, where market exchange is seen to constitute and reproduce political and ideological discourse and practice (see e.g. Maclaran et al., 2010; Saren and Svensson, 2009; Saren et al., 2007; Skålén et al., 2008; Tadjewski and Brownlie, 2008), challenging the orthodox understandings, assumptions and practices of mainstream management theory (Alvesson et al., 2009). Here, power, rather than efficiency, is the point of departure for understanding how forms of social order manifest, and how they are or can be challenged in an individual and collective effort. To value creation, this research explicates a theoretical perspective entitled ‘collective–conflictual value creation’ (see Laamanen and Skålén, 2015). This perspective is a novel contribution that aims to extend our current understanding of the value creation discourse in marketing theory, and one that also has general relevance to management literature.

The marketing discourse on value creation, and particularly SDL in its various iterations, is critically examined in this study. As will be further discussed in chapter 2, current theorisations of value creation to a large degree fail to disentangle the particular dynamics of value creation as well as the form of social order and politics they promote. The implications of value-creating interactions for actors’ positions, positional power, ideologies and institutions (logics, values, norms and objects) and environments are central issues to critical inquiries (see e.g. Arndt, 1981, 1983; Corvellec and Hultman, 2014; Fligstein, 1996; Giesler, 2008; Kozinets and Handelman, 2004; Varman and Belk, 2009; van Wijk et al., 2013). Likewise, this study is positioned at the intersection of studies in value creation literature (particularly SDL and its systemic stream of theorising; see e.g. Lusch and Vargo, 2014), collectivities and conflict – this positioning is illustrated in the following figure 1.

With the value creation literature moving increasingly from singular and relational perspectives to considering how value creating systems, such as markets/service systems are constructed (beginning with Normann and Ramírez, 1993), there is a natural intersection for literature on value creation and collectivities. For instance, consumer communities and their activities (e.g. Cova and White, 2010; Dalli and Corciolani, 2008; O’Guinn & Muñiz, 2005; Pongsakornrungrungsilp and Schroeder, 2011; Rosenbaum, 2013; Schau et al., 2009) provides a perspective for inquiry into how communities generate forms of association and order between users, brands as objects and the ideologies and logics membership and affiliation carry. This is particularly delineated and amplified by shared identities and practices that become established in these communities. Mutual value creation as an intersectional construct refers to how configurations of (collective) actors aim to create value and mutual benefit in systems stabilised through shared logics, identities, affiliations et cetera.

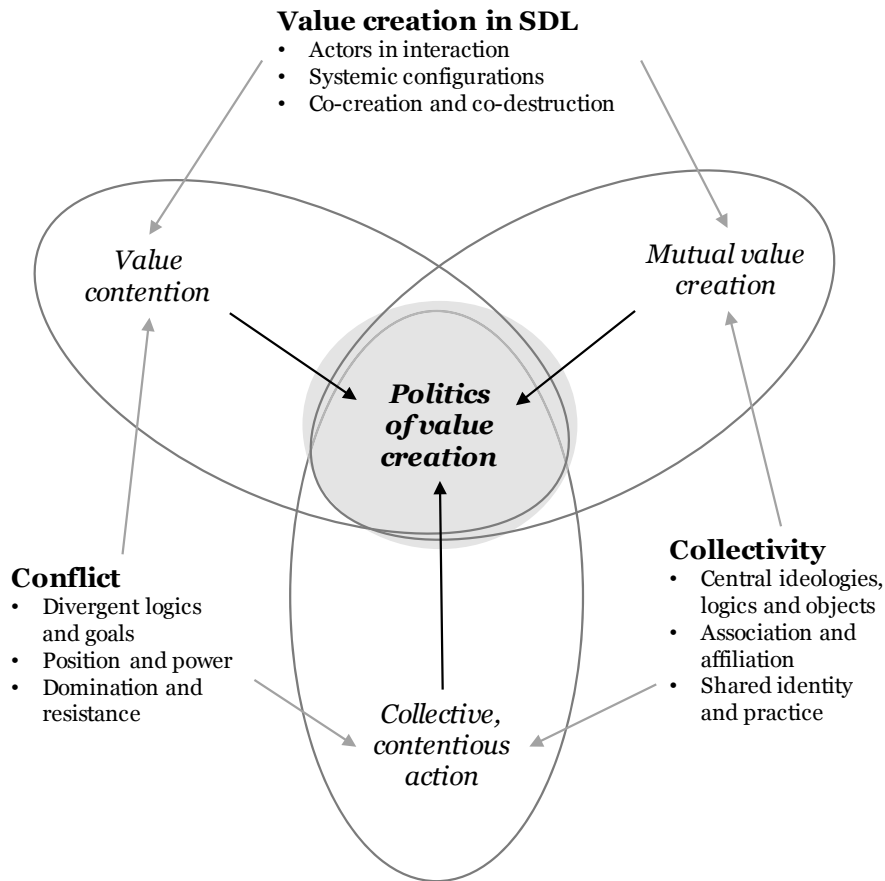


Figure 1 Positioning the study

On the other hand, the various forms of conflict are emerging *en masse* as of late. Conflict dynamics relate to how social life is organised – how identities, institutions, memberships et cetera are (re)constructed and how, subsequently, groups wage for position, power and resources in their social context. As such, conflict subsumes some configuration of actors and their interaction, a contested issue (ideology, logic, idea, object) and subsequent strategies and tactics by the participant actors in a social context and in front of audiences. Conflict can result in either re-establishing the previous social order or lead to (radical) change and a new social order. Generally, it is seen to foster innovation and cohesion in social systems, while also potentially constituting a mechanism of (further) domination.

Conflict can be theorised as the essence of social life and occurs ‘whenever incompatible activities occur’ (Deutsch, 1973, p. 10). According to Sanderson (2007), conflict occurs between individuals and groups with opposing interests, power, and economic resources, allowing for domination and control by certain groups over others. Domination and subordination are pervasive and self-perpetuating. The Marxist perspective of class antagonism considers the ownership of the means of production the root of struggle and discord, whereas the Weberian view observes the bureaucratic organisation (i.e. hierarchical institutions and organisations) as the means of production and cause for

conflict (Sanderson, 2007). Simmel (1955), Coser (1957) and Deutsch (1973) envision conflict as representing an inescapable dynamic of human interaction and social organisation.

Table 1 The variables of conflict (Deutsch, 1973, p. 5-7)

The characteristics of the parties in conflict	their values and motivations ... aspirations and objectives ... physical, intellectual and social resources for waging or resolving the conflict ... beliefs about conflict including conceptions of strategy and tactics...
Their prior relationship to one another	their attitudes, beliefs and expectations about one another, including each one's belief about the other's view of him, and particularly the degree of polarization that has occurred on such evaluations as "good-bad", "trustworthy-untrustworthy"
The nature of the issue giving rise to the conflict	its scope, rigidity, motivational significance, formulation, periodicity, etc.
The social environment within which the conflict occurs	the facilities and restraints, the encouragements and deterrents it provides with regard to the different strategies and tactics of waging or resolving conflict, including the nature of the social norms and institutional forms of regulating conflict
The interested audiences to the conflict	their relationships to the parties and to one another, their interests in the conflict and its outcome, their characteristics
The strategy and tactics employed by the parties in the conflict	in assessing and/or changing one another's utilities, disutilities, and subjective probabilities ... in influencing the other's conceptions of one's own utilities and disutilities through tactics that vary along such dimensions as legitimacy-illegitimacy, the relative use of positive and negative incentives such as promises and rewards or threats and punishments, freedom of choice-coercion, the openness and veracity of communication and sharing of information, the degree of credibility ... [and] commitment, types of motives appealed to...
The consequences of the conflict to each of the participants and to other interested parties	the gains or losses relating to the immediate issue in conflict, the precedents established, the internal changes in the participants resulting from having engaged in conflict, the long-term effects on the relationship between the parties involved, the reputation that each party develops in the eyes of the various interested audiences

According to Deutsch (1973), to understand conflict, we need to understand the characteristics of the conflictual actors (parties), their prior relationship, the central issue, the social environment and audiences, the actors' strategies and tactics and the consequences of conflict (table 1). Regarding outcomes, Deutsch (1972) makes a distinction between destructive and constructive conflicts. In the former case, 'participants are dissatisfied with the outcomes and feel they have lost as a result of the conflict', whereas in the latter, 'participants all are satisfied with the outcomes and feel they have gained as a result of the conflict' (Deutsch, 1972, p. 17). In agreement, to Coser (1957), conflict has individual and collective value in hindering the ossification of social

systems, fostering innovation, building identification and group cohesiveness and inducing personal and social change.

Classical theorisations of value and its creation have illustrated how the structure of value creation relationships – the various objectives, positions and power, particularly those between capital and labour – are the cause of sustained strife between actors (Marx, 2013; Smith, 2015). In value creation literature, incompatible interaction leads to value destruction, opportunism, and exploitation (cf. Bonsu and Darmody, 2008; Cova and Dalli, 2009; Cova and Paranque, 2012; Echeverri and Skålén 2011; Ertimur and Venkatesh 2010; Plé and Chumpitaz Cáceres 2010; Zwick et al., 2008). Hence, it is possible to establish a stock of dissonance and collectivism in value creation literature. This particularly relates to SDL, as a new theory of economics and society (Vargo and Lusch, 2008, p. 6; also Vargo and Lusch, 2016). Yet, my critique toward such grandiose goals is that they need more sensitisation to differing logics, relational dynamics and potential and actual divergent outcomes that challenge the canon of collaboration in mutual benefit. While value contention can take on both individual and collective forms, the compositions, dynamics and outcomes of value creation are, in this study, examined on a collective level.

From a societal purview, various collective actions in their social contexts are the basis for the endurance or transformation within the capitalist market economy. Where the current value creation theory is skewed towards a growth economy framework (this is explicit in Vargo and Lusch, 2016), environmental and social sustainability, inequality, quality of life, security, and basic human needs are the roots for alternative, social, ethical, and moral economies that resist the current status quo (e.g. Arvidsson, 2008, 2009; Arvidsson and Peitersen, 2013; Gibson-Graham, 2006; Laczniak and Murphy, 2008, 2012; Peñaloza and Mish, 2011; Safri, 2014; Wahlen and Laamanen, 2015). The processes and practices of collective contention are designated here as collective action. Here, both the collective nature of action and its conflictual roots are central to analysis of collective, contentious action. Theories of collective action offer auspicious literature for underscoring the political, ideological and practical implications of value creation.

In this study, I particularly draw from a recent theory of strategic action fields (Fligstein and McAdam, 2011, 2012; McAdam and Scott, 2005) where collective activities either challenge or maintain the field in question. The following figure 2 elaborates the theoretical divergence and convergence between the central theorisations – SDL and SAF – on the importance of conflict, context, social order, level of analysis and activities. For instance, and for which I will give a more eloquent argument in the coming chapters, approaches to value creation have a particular affinity to stability and harmony, treating conflict as rather irrelevant. Contrariwise, studies of collective action illustrate the challenges and practices toward change or why and how certain conditions endure, although stability is challenged by mounting pressures. In both cases conflict is a significant driver of stability and radical change.

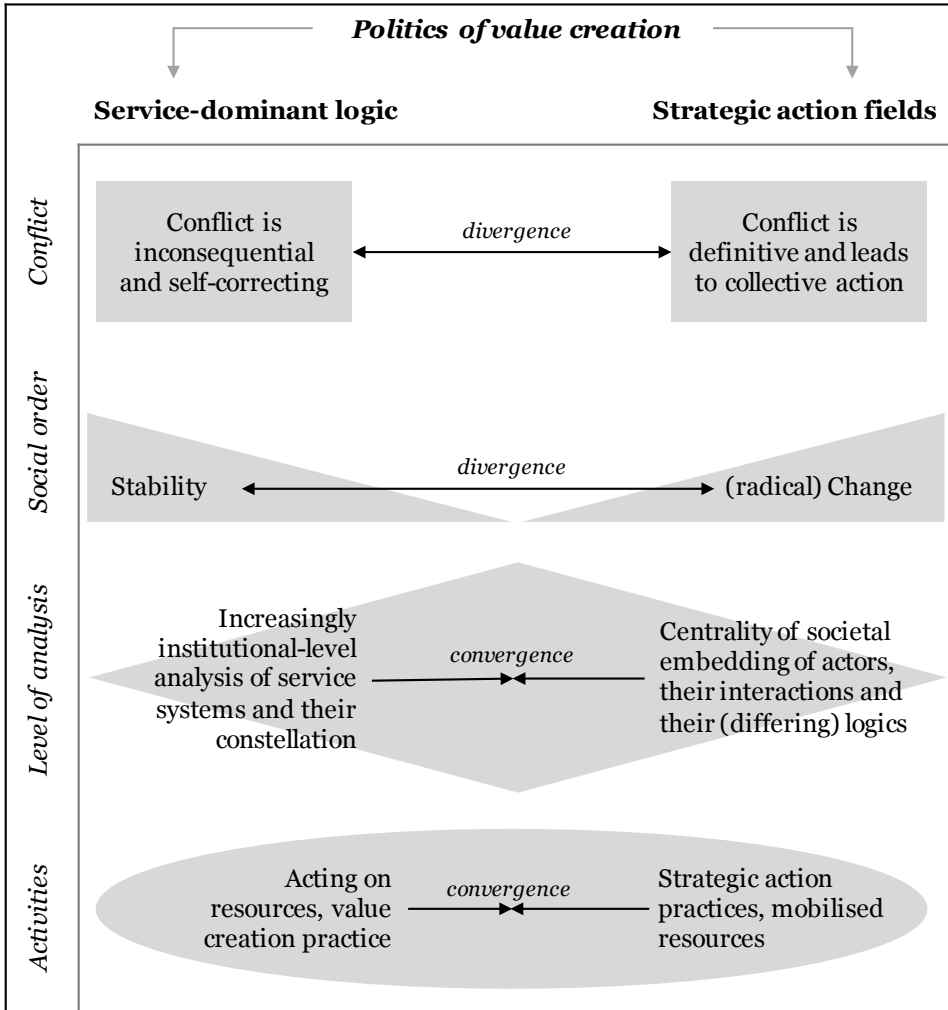


Figure 2 Theoretical assumptions towards the politics of value creation

Here, an analysis of strategic action fields illustrates how collective action can support extant structures or change them. This is examined both on collective and societal levels in the various interactions of groups and individuals, where conflict is present and perceived to be definitive, rather than inconsequential (see *conflict* in figure 2). It is in this intersection where the politics of value creation can connect the stability-oriented value creation approaches and change-driven collective action (relation to *social order* in figure 2). The SAF approach sees individual experience (such as enlightenment, liberation or self-fulfilment) as but one outcome of activity that aims to change the conditions of when collective action emerges, thereby extending the currently central discourse in SDL, where the individual actor, while embedded in systems, is the epicentre of focus (illustrated as the *level of analysis* in figure 2).

In relating the field approach to value creation, Laamanen and Skålén (2015) introduced a framework consisting of actors, interactions, practices and outcomes of collective–

conflictual value creation. In this dissertation, this framework is elaborated by an empirical investigation of the Finnish labour movement, where various understandings of the essence of unionism and conflict lead to some mechanisms that sustain the opposition of a subordinated position, whereas others aim to manage and contain the field conflict. Where the latter refers to institutionalised mechanisms, such as collective bargaining and negotiations, the former presents ways in which the labour movement can be revitalised. Here, boundaries become redrawn, organisations reformed, interactions rethought and labour itself redefined (cf. Clawson, 2003). For instance, as neoliberal consumerist subjectivity becomes increasingly commonsensical, collectivist identities and solidarities start to give way to rational cost–benefit calculations. The extant literature elaborates this as the slow death of solidarity-based unionism with the rise of service provision and union consumerism. Examining the movement’s framing efforts illustrates how resistance is imagined and translated into strategic practice.

It is this institutionalised discourse of marketing that constructs the individual, identity and value creation. In the labour movement, business-like and service-oriented unionism is a clear representation of this, sometimes, yet not always successfully, challenged by organising-based unionism. Examining unions can therefore further elaborate on the marketisation of social relations, how this influences the stability of social structures and also the limits of our current dominant logics, whether in market, organisational or social relations. This study attempts to grasp the emic perspective of the labour movement actors in Finland, as well as the power dimension, by employing critical ethnography. This approach is unique, since there is no previous research on this topic in the Finnish context or in other high union density setting.

1.5 Structure of this dissertation

Beyond the introduction to this dissertation above, what follows is divided into three parts. This follows from the inspiration from John Van Maanen (2011a), who discerns ethnography as three types of work: fieldwork, headwork and textwork. Following this (and given that writing a dissertation is a lot of textwork), I will present the following parts I to III as *groundwork*, *fieldwork* and *headwork*. An overview of the chapters is further given in the following figure 3.

Part I – *groundwork* – sets the theoretical scene. Given the interdisciplinary nature of my approach and the empirical context of organised labour, the theoretical groundwork is multi-layered. In chapter 2, I will discuss current perspectives of value creation in marketing. This section, firstly, works to ground this dissertation in the relevant discourses, and secondly, to demonstrate what the current theory omits. Here, the various theoretical strands are, for clarity and brevity, incorporated into three dimensions: individual–harmonious, collective–harmonious, and individual–conflictual. Each of these dimensions will be discussed through conceptual and empirical work that portray the intrinsic argument, conceptual construction and empirical approaches.

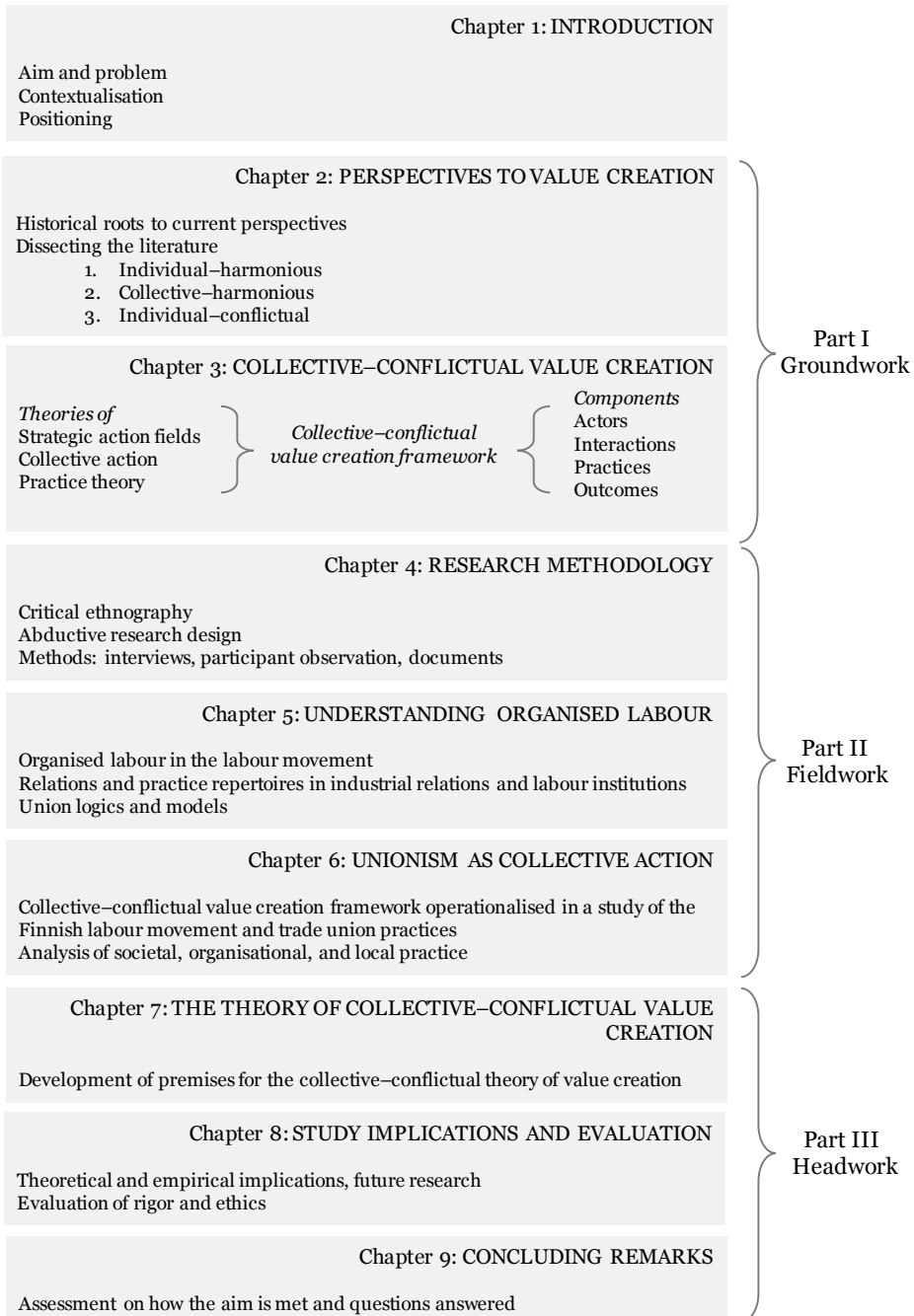


Figure 3 Overview of the study

I argue that currently, the collective–conflictual dimension of value creation is underdeveloped, whereby particular scrutiny towards this will be given in chapter 3. The collective and discordant nature of value-creating activity is established through examination of sociological approaches to strategic action fields, collective action and practice theory. These theoretical approaches converge in emphasising particular forms of social organisation, where collaboration and contention form social relations in fields, shared grievances meet individual goals, and practices become established through mutual understandings, in connection to material affordances and the actors’ skill set. This approach buttresses the scant theorising of collective and discordant social dynamics of value.

In order to connect collective action – and particularly its discordant propensities – to the value creation theory, the theory of strategic action fields (Fligstein and McAdam, 2012, 2011; McAdam and Scott, 2005) arches this discussion. The SAF theory builds upon several other theories, such as Giddens’ structuration theory, Bourdieu’s field theory, social movement theories, and organisation theory. This part will end in a discussion of the framework developed by Laamanen and Skålen (2015) on the application of the strategic action field approach to value creation. This framework introduces the theoretical elements that can be operationalised in an empirical approach to study collective–conflictual value creation.

Part II – *fieldwork* – explicates the ethnography I conducted in the Finnish labour movement. First, I will present the research methodology, data collection, and analysis. This is followed by the contextualisation of the empirical research (1) through describing the labour movement as a challenger actor in society; (2) industrial relations as the field of value-creating activity, and (3) the current state of the Finnish labour market and industrial relations. Through the empirical material, I will show an on-going polarisation and balance of individualisation and collectivism that give form to various understandings and frames, and the responsive strategic and operative action taken by trade union organisations. In these chapters, I will discuss strategic collective action being construed on an organisational level, whereby I will particularly examine how field frames of collective action are illustrated in organisational strategising. Finally, everyday practices of unionisation at the local level in activist and member settings are contrasted with the above. Through this, I wish to elucidate an image of the Finnish organised labour and labour market, the relationships and activities that constitute, maintain and reshape its structures as well as consequences for the well-being and justice in society.

Finally, in part III – *headwork* – I will connect the empirical research back with the theory of value creation. Here, the focus is to answer the research questions and encapsulate the contribution of my research to the focal theory. While the limitations of the empirical research render my findings not generalisable to the entire Finnish or Nordic labour movement, which in itself is continuously developing and dynamic in its structure, my findings portray more general activities and relationships that make up collective and conflictual forms of value creation. In this section, premises toward a more general theory of collective–conflictual value creation are put forward illustrating the politics of value creation. The dissertation comes to a close with a discussion of theoretical, empirical and practical implications, discussion of research rigour, and avenues for further research.

PART I – Groundwork

Men journey together with a view to particular advantage, and by the way of providing some particular thing needed for the purposes of life, and similarly the political association seems to have come together originally, and to continue in existence, for the sake of the general advantages it brings.

(Aristotle in *Ethics*, quoted in Olson, 1971, p. 6)

2 PERSPECTIVES TO VALUE CREATION

If we accept the Aristotelian thought that men journey together for common benefit and needs in life and build political alliances for those same reasons, that is, if social practices – including those that create value – are shared and supported by distinct forms of socio-political organisation, the theoretical puzzle becomes ‘why are these collective phenomena exiguous in theorisations of value creation?’ Classical marketing theory can be used as reference points on a map to understand the development and state of the current marketing thought, its epistemologies and paradigmatic assumptions. In the following, I will review central theories in marketing and relate these to the current discourses on value, its nature and creation. This chapter presents a literature mapping, which sets the scene for a discussion on the social and political nature of value creation, which will be further extended in chapter 3.

2.1 Dissecting the contemporary literature on value creation

The focus of value in exchange has traditionally been in determining and managing transactional, embedded value. This is central to the goods-dominant logic (Lusch and Vargo, 2014; Vargo and Lusch, 2004). According to this view, exchange in the market economy and commercial relations aims for the maximisation of satisfaction, utility and profit, and take place when these factors can be obtained for the parties involved. This framing implies that ‘...a transaction occurs only under the conditions of mutual satisfaction where a benefit is traded for a benefit’ (Bagozzi, 1975, p. 318). This is most clearly manifested in market price and market share, that is, in the relationship of buying and selling and the efficiency of the commercial machine founded on informed, rational behaviour of the participants. Here, transaction stands for the distribution of value; offerings exchanged for money with distinct roles for the producer and the consumer (Vargo et al., 2008).

Subsequently, on the most primary level, a relationship between a customer and a provider is based on singular, discrete transactions. Transactional relationships are the basis of the goods-dominant logic of marketing, whereby predetermined value is distributed and value becomes exchanged (value-in-exchange). The traditional view on value has been supplier-centred and driven by market return. In some service studies, examining value and value creation shifted from transaction and supplier-centrism to being focused on customer perceptions. Here, studies focused on customer value perceptions of benefits of products and services against the various expenses of their acquisition, use and goal attainment (Woodruff and Gardial, 1996; Zeithaml, 1988). These rational behaviour models assumed the ability and willingness on the part of the consumers to perform these calculations. Fundamentally, in either approach, exchange and use were isolated, functional activities for the parties involved.

In the wake of service-dominant logic, exchange made way to interaction and resource integration, as the central element of value creation. Value is conceived to emerge from a consumption process and practices of the individual in possession of or with access to service offerings and various resources. Depending on the approach, value creation is an individual effort on the part of the customer, with the service provider cast in a role of facilitator (e.g. Grönroos, 2011; Grönroos and Ravald, 2011), or bilateral co-creation and interaction in a micro-level relational dyad (Vargo and Lusch, 2004, 2008) or in macro-level service ecosystem (Lusch and Vargo, 2014).

Interaction as the basic phenomenon in the formation of value-in-use is chiefly understood as taking place in direct interchange whilst also being influenced and influencing the wider environment (Grönroos, 2011; Grönroos and Voima, 2013; Heinonen et al., 2010; Vargo and Lusch, 2008). The current consensus is that value-in-use is the outcome of a dynamic, cumulative, heterogeneous and experiential/phenomenological process (Gummerus, 2013; Grönroos 2011; Lusch et al. 2007; Vargo and Lusch, 2008; Vargo et al., 2008), where knowledge and skills are employed in a collaboration on various resources. Value creation is thus a resource integration process, where the user, provider and the environments (various stakeholders) become integrated, collaborate, and (mostly) become better off (Grönroos, 2008, 2011; Vargo and Lusch, 2008; Lusch and Webster, 2011).

The marketing literature on value creation has been taken in various directions, subsequently impacting conceptual development. Consequently, analysing the literature on value creation can take the examination and comparison of the three central theories (see next section 2.2) to extract a logic and function of value and its creation. There is a general variation in concepts used⁴ within the value discourse: the use of the same or similar concepts has led to increasing ambiguity and contestation of concepts, their meanings and hierarchical order (e.g. Grönroos and Voima, 2013; Gummerus, 2013). While conceptual clarity through distinction is central for developing theorisations, preoccupation with definitions and conceptual ordering deflects efforts of ‘zooming out’ theory (cf. Vargo and Lusch, 2016). For this purpose, analysis needs to be sensitive to both the process (i.e. actor, resources and activities) and the outcomes as well as divergence and multiplicity of actors and analytic levels (Gummerus, 2013; Vargo and Lusch, 2016). Zooming out extends the discussions in and around how value gets created and, indeed, what it is. To zoom out, I approach the literature here by clustering it according to thematic units plotted on two conceptual dimensions of *individual–collective* and *harmonious–conflictual*. The subsequent 2x2 matrix generated a clustering into four quadrants, based on a relative similarity and alignment of theorisations and empirical studies, demonstrating general tendencies in literature related to the scale and dynamics as well as processes, outcomes and ‘beneficiaries’ of value creation.

The dimensionalisation along the *individual–collective* spectrum relates to the question of whether the processes and/or outcomes of value creation are related to individual or singular relationships, or whether these are shared in a larger context (such as network or system) and between several actors. The collective perspective also includes indirect consequences that follow from a systemic elaboration. The assumption of mutual benefit is central to the *harmony–conflict* dimension, and it tackles the question of whether value creation is perceived to and/or actually has favourable implications to all or some participating actors. The logic of assigning a group of studies to one of these sectors follows this dual distinction. Further, the spheres in figure 4 represent categories of studies that are distinct in theoretical and/or empirical approaches, yet share some assumptions with regards to the nature and creation of value. These similarities, but also the differences, are further elaborated in the chapters below.

⁴ The value-in- variations include, for instance, value-in-context (Vargo, 2009; Chandler and Vargo, 2011), value-in-social-context (Edvardsson et al., 2011), and value-in-life (Heinonen et al., 2010).

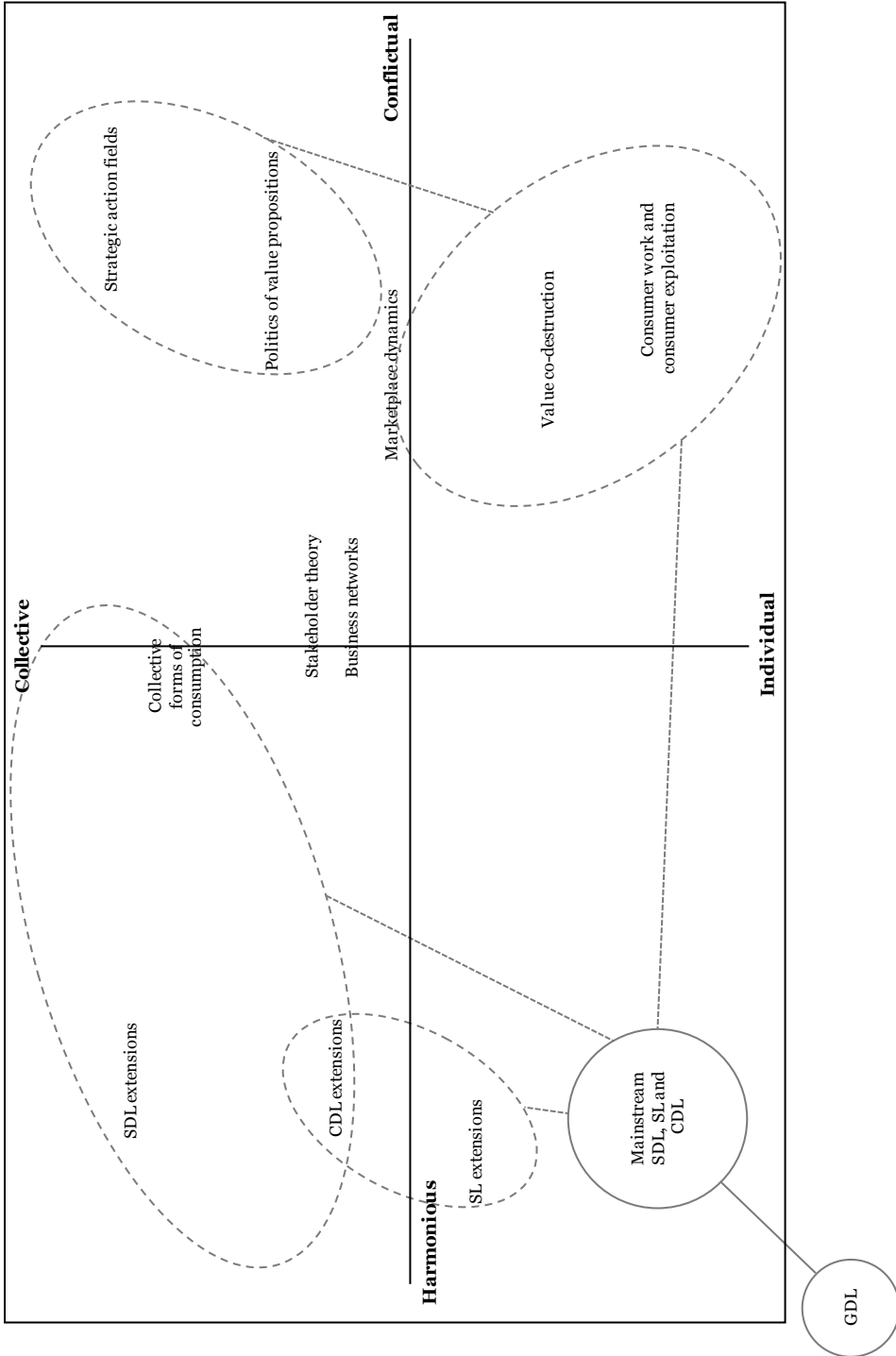


Figure 4 Mapping value creation literature

On the offset, the approach taken here excludes any (substantial) considerations of GDL and this is why GDL appears outside of figure 4. This is consistent with the general value (co-)creation literature, which necessitates some interaction and integration resources and activities, and into which GDL is embedded in (an assumption I share with SDL, see e.g. Vargo and Lusch, 2016, p. 10). As such, the natural starting place is with the mainstream theorisation⁵ of value creation. Despite some differences discussed in table 2 below, these theories of value creation commonly share a basic foundation in individualism, experience, and/or harmony in a dyadic value-creating interaction.

Particularly, the emergent sociological dimensions of value creation are particularly of interest in the following chapters and in the context of this dissertation: I label these as *collective* and *conflictual* streams that extend the current literature. Other nomenclature for analogous approaches includes service and service ecosystems for the former, and value co-destruction for the latter. These extant perspectives are illustrated in the figure 4 by the collective–harmonious (upper left) quadrant and individual–conflictual (lower right) quadrant. These streams are sociological, inasmuch as they consider groups and dynamics without primarily aiming to generate managerial implications. In research to date, the former stream has theorised interactions on a network or a community level (e.g. Schau et al., 2009; Lusch and Vargo, 2014) whereas the latter has examined the sinister features of value creation through concepts such as co-destruction, double exploitation and opportunism (Bonsu and Darmody, 2009; Corvellec and Hultman, 2014; Cova and Dalli, 2009; Cova et al., 2015; Echeverri and Skålén, 2011; Ertimur and Venkatesh, 2010; Plé and Chumpitaz Cáceres, 2010; Zwick et al., 2008). As such, these are evolutionary developments and (partial) critiques of the mainstream theory, respectively. Towards the end of theorising collective and conflictual dimensions of value creation, studies pertaining to this particular view are grouped in the upper right quadrant of figure 4.

The theoretical and empirical framework to the study of the collective and conflictual dynamics of value creation is further discussed in chapter 3.

2.2 Individual–harmonious value creation

Collaboration between the customer and the (service) providers leads to co-creation of value (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004; Vargo and Lusch, 2004). With this idea came a paradigm shift from the exchange and product(ion) orientation of the goods-dominant logic. Particularly the seminal paper on *service-dominant logic* (SDL; Vargo and Lusch, 2004) reconfigured the field of marketing as it redefined the meaning of value and the process of value creation. Value is unique and emerges in the individual’s co-creation experiences, where the consumer and the firm collaborate to co-create and compete to extract value (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). Consequently, interaction became the locus, and individual experience the focus of value creation. With service-dominant logic, the role of customers became more active as they participate in exchange and coproduction, and their value-in-use determines the overall value from the customer perspective (Vargo and Lusch, 2004).

⁵ Designating theory as mainstream is not used here in a derogative manner, but indicates the centrality of the theory to the ongoing discussion (in terms of impact, number of citations, et cetera).

Originally, Vargo and Lusch (2004) argue that in SDL, service provision, interaction and value-in-use replace goods-dominated exchange by assigning agency to the customer and changing her role to an operant resource. SDL relies on eight fundamental premises (FP), whereby the customer becomes the co-producer of service and value (original FP6)⁶. While the locus of exchange remains dyadic, value now emerges in the interaction of the service provision, and as a consequence, goods or other exchange objects are conceptualised as not containing predefined value, but as vehicles (operand resources) of value co-creating activities requiring and integrating customer skill and knowledge (operant resources). Later, Vargo and Lusch (2008) modify and extend both the scope and the number of foundational premises (FPs), further emphasising interactionality and the centrality of the customer as co-creator (they consequently cease using co-production as a concept). Moreover, the modifications also include networks. Finally, with FP10 (later, axiom 4 in Lusch and Vargo, 2014) experience becomes a key fundament of current discourse.

Grönroos' *service logic* approach (SL; 2006, 2008, 2011) challenges the SDL assumption regarding the positions of actors and the processes that are central to value creation. Rather than integrating customers in value creation, service and service providers should be seen as (potentially) engaging in co-creation in the customer's processes, facilitating value creation therein (see also Grönroos and Gummerus, 2015). Value creation in SL is understood as co-creation when it takes place in the integrated joint value creation processes, where the service provider and the customer interact; beyond joint processes, value is created only in the customer's own processes, which the supplier and service can facilitate by resourcing the customer use processes where service transforms into value (Grönroos and Ravald, 2011). Value creation and co-creation imply diverging roles to the customer and the firm and impact the scope, locus, and nature of value and value creation. The fundamental analytic concept is use, which is seen to reflect the social, spatial, temporal and physical context and the dynamics of that context. The process of value creation refers to the customer's use situation and subsequently emergent value, which has contextual parameters through direct and indirect interactions (by providers or the customer's context) in the customer's use processes. (Grönroos and Voima, 2013).

Customer-dominant logic (CDL; Heinonen et al., 2010) centres value creation within the customer's processes and, in particular, customers' everyday lives. In this reframing, rather than service or processes of exchange, the focus is on '...how a company's service is and becomes embedded in the customer's contexts, activities, practices, and experiences' (Heinonen et al., 2010, p. 533). In this way CDL challenges provider participation in customer processes⁷ and the discernibility of customer value creation experiences, processes and outcomes to the service provider. Understanding activities and experiences in context enables a better 'fit' between the provider and customer, where the context comprises indirect or loosely connected customer activities, experiences and influences, where a provider's influence (and possible interest) may be limited to the visible aspects of the interactional process. Consequently, the providers often disregard the 'hidden elements' of the value creation processes that may nonetheless be important to consider.

⁶ Subsequently, this foundational premise was altered to 'the customer is always a co-creator of value' (Vargo and Lusch, 2008, p. 8) to reflect the interactional foundation of SDL. In later iterations (Lusch and Vargo, 2014; Vargo and Lusch, 2016), this FP was elevated to the status of an axiom of SDL.

⁷ In a later discussion, Heinonen and Strandvik (2015) claim that SDL and SL are chiefly provider-dominant perspectives constrained to and engaging with provider-centered interaction (for a visualisation, see the literature mapping by Strandvik and Heinonen, 2015, p. 116).

Table 2 below depicts the original formulations of the three foundational approaches to value creation. It should therefore be noted, that the approaches have since been extended, as illustrated in figure 4 above: these moves to extend the original view are illustrated with the lines, and their connections are discussed in the following subchapters.

Table 2 Three foundational approaches to value creation literature

	SDL	SL	CDL
<i>Central actors</i>	Focus on service exchange renders the interaction of customers and suppliers as the central consideration	Centrality of customer value-in-use with dyadic interaction, allowing the supplier and service to facilitate it	Value creation can truly be understood as being related to the customer and the customer's life
<i>Processes</i>	Value is always co-created (originally, service is co-produced) [FP6] Instead of goods, application of skill and knowledge is fundamental to exchange [FP1]	Value creation happens on three levels and two particular service logics: 1. Provider processes and logic 2. Joint processes 3. Customer processes and logic Value is co-created only in joint processes Also possible contextual influences	Customer processes and control are central For the customer, value creation spans temporal and processual dimensions Everyday and mundane activities
<i>Implication</i>	Experience of value is subjective [FP10] Centrality of interaction with the customer and integration of customer knowledge and skill	Centring on customer value creation processes (customer value-in-use) with moderate interest on service provider value creation	Much of customer value creation (including resource integration) is invisible to and out of control of the service provider
<i>Key literature</i>	Vargo and Lusch, 2004, 2008	Grönroos, 2006, 2008, 2011	Heinonen et al., 2010

In SDL, value is always co-created in resource-integrating systems, whereas in SL and CDL, value is created by the customer with the possibility of participation by the provider. Grönroos and Gummerus (2015, p. 91) differentiate a driver role in value creation, explicating that the actor driving and in charge of the process is either the customer in SL or the provider in SDL, whereby in SL, the provider can engage in the customer process and vice versa in SDL. In contrast, CDL takes a holistic perspective to value creation, as resources are integrated in the various situations in the customer's life, temporalities and contextual dynamics (see Heinonen et al., 2010). There's certain familiarity between SL and CDL, particularly to the extent in which the processes of value

creation are considered (to a degree) independent from the service provider. Moreover, recently SDL can be seen as abstracted in actor-to-actor (A2A) exchange (see Lusch and Vargo, 2014), by which the roles and dynamics in value (co-)creation become increasingly blurred (cf. Saarijärvi et al., 2013), and exchange can be virtually anything in the social context.

Value is created both in exchange and use impacted by associated meanings. Meaning attached are nonetheless not created in a vacuum, but influenced by multiple actors, subjectivities and practices and have an impact on and by their environments (Peñaloza and Venkatesh, 2006; also Karababa and Kjeldgaard, 2014). As such, context provides a missing dynamic related to collective influences in value creation discourse. The three perspectives illustrated above differ in the extent to which context matters, and how it becomes operationalised in an empirical study. Context can be perceived as the structural framework influencing the conditions for value creation; however, the impact of the social ecosystem is rather inconsequential, as the ‘...customer may [or may not] socially co-create value with them’ (Grönroos and Gummerus, 2015, p. 91). Consequently, conceptually *SL extensions* remain embedded in individual considerations that exclude contextual (network) factors for clarity purposes (Grönroos, 2011), or at best, treat these ambiguously. In SL, the dynamics and change of the social, spatial, temporal and physical contextual factors influence the customer’s possibilities to integrate resources and the value derivable in use (Grönroos and Voima 2013; also Grönroos and Gummerus, 2015). Considerations of contextual influence rely on conceptual formulations of social value creation and empirical studies supporting or refuting these conceptualisations are not readily available. In SDL, originally collective (systemic) factors were not considered, as the approach and explanation were micro-level oriented (Vargo and Lusch, 2016). Following early critiques, the boundaries of inquiry widened; but there are others who influenced the pathways of inquiry already earlier.

2.3 Collective–harmonious value creation

The work of Richard Normann (2001; Normann and Ramírez, 1993; Wikström and Normann, 1994) sets the fundament of collective perspectives to value creation. Here, the departure point is not how value can be created by an organisation, but rather how value creation takes place in complex actor constellations, where businesses mobilise customers (and their resources) as assets, so that they can consequently create value for themselves. The role of an organisation is to strategically reconfigure and device functioning value-creating systems comprising the relationships to customers, suppliers, and competitors. Competitiveness (winning, more precisely) is, for Normann and Ramírez (1993), based on scripting the system, mobilising and training the actors, and centralising the customer as the value arbitrator. Furthermore, success relies on the ability of providers to form and capitalise on social and political alliances, while being aware of the potential of conflict (suspicion and resistance) that strategic action carries. Clearly, this final point (which is also the closing discussion on politics, policy and the resolution of tension of Normann’s book [2001]) harbingers the direction of value creation as a collective and conflictual phenomenon. Yet, generally collective approaches to value creation are pronouncedly harmonious in nature

Arguing for the profitability of a long-term, stakeholder-inclusive outlook, Porter and Kramer (2011) elaborate on the societal and collective dimensions of value creation. Their concept of shared value stands for economic value created in a way that concurrently addresses social needs and challenges, and from a societal perspective, the

nature of social organisation (be it business, NGO or governmental agency) generating value is inconsequential; the important factor is the benefit to cost ration in producing the value (Porter and Kramer, 2011). In a similar vein, Lusch and Webster (2011) argue that successful value creation relies on strategic matching of interacting partners and their contextual setting in a way that 'good' relationships (i.e. mutually beneficial, loyal) relationships ensues. Customers and other resource providing stakeholders engage when there is perceivable value, and thus, it is necessary to understand co-creation beyond the customer-provider interface.

Within organisations, collective value creation is often seen as the outcome of '...coordinated and cooperative efforts undertaken by multiple agents within firms to exploit the value creation potential of the firms' resources' (Bridoux et al., 2011, p. 712). Managing and encouraging collective value creation raises the key issue of individual motives to cooperate across interaction networks. From an organisational perspective, collective value creation is the interplay between a firm's motivational system and its employees' mix of motives (Bridoux et al., 2011). While ranging from societal to organisational levels, these examples elaborate how value emerges as constellations of various actors drawing on pooled resources in interaction. It bears particular similarity to literature on service systems and service ecosystems, which are designated as *SDL extensions* in figure 4 (see e.g. Chandler and Vargo, 2011; Edvardsson et al., 2011; Kieliszewski et al., 2012; Spohrer et al., 2007).

In service systems, value-in-context (Chandler and Vargo, 2011) highlights social interaction, as it conceptualises how context that frames exchange between two actors can be seen simultaneously as exchange within and among service ecosystems, as participant actors in the context are always integrating and exchanging resources within a particular relational setting, but also serving other actors elsewhere. This movement between multiple contexts implies access to resources that are both directly and indirectly available; in this way, exchange transcends the immediate context and resources, and resources are pooled more comprehensively in overlapping and dynamic service ecosystems. Changes in service systems are illustrated in the dynamic constellations of relations (dyad, triads, and networks), wherein models of interactions are based on voluntary association (Wynstra et al., 2015): 'firms can choose how to act, but the possibilities are determined by the often long-lasting relation they have with specific customers, suppliers, competitors, producers of complementary goods, customers' customers, etc.' (Wynstra et al., 2015, p. 4; see also Ritter et al., 2004). The dynamics of the aforementioned relations are theorised as being based on voluntary participation, resulting in self-organising and malleable systems aiming to create mutual benefit. Fluid constellations of actors can induce both change and conflict, but importantly, conflict is by nature always economic (Ritter et al., 2004; Wynstra et al., 2015).

Value creation in service systems (Edvardsson et al., 2011, 2012) implies resource integration that needs to account for both the structural makeup as well as the agency of actors in the social setting. Social structures set hierarchies, norms and rules, through which actors enact their value co-creation roles. Taken in this social embedding, the measure of value becomes value-in-social-context. Drawing on Giddens' structuration theory, Edvardsson and his co-authors (2011, 2012) theorise how service systems are dualities structured by societal norms, rules and actor roles, whereby agency attempts to (re)form these systems. In a revision of *SDL* (Lusch and Vargo, 2014; Vargo and Lusch, 2011, 2016), orientation to structuration and the duality of agency and structure becomes evident in envisioning exchange as an actor-to-actor (*A2A*) service ecosystem. Within this pronouncedly dynamic, networked and systems perspective, the boundaries

between the exchange partners dissolve (hence, the designation as A2A). According to Vargo and Lusch (2011), all actors are fundamentally doing the same things while co-creating value through resource integration and service provision in collaborative systemic settings. Service ecosystems are ‘...relatively self-contained, self-adjusting systems of resource-integrating actors that are connected by shared institutional logics and mutual value creation through service exchange’ (Lusch and Vargo, 2014, p. 24; see also Vargo and Lusch, 2016).

As of late, institutional logic has emerged in the SDL vernacular (see Lusch and Vargo, 2014; Vargo and Lusch, 2016, in particular). Vargo and Lusch (2016) explain shared institutions and institutional arrangements as fundamental to understanding value creation. Indeed, they claim that ‘value creation can only be fully understood in terms of integrated resources applied for another actor’s benefit (service) within a context ... including the institutions and institutional arrangements that enable and constrain value creation’ (Vargo and Lusch, 2016, p. 14). While this argumentation is soundly abreast and connected with the systemic developments in SDL, it fails to extend interaction beyond collaboration, or how change comes about. An exception to this is a study by Skålén and Edvardsson (2015), who examines the transformation of firms from GDL to SDL from an institutional logic change perspective, and how change is driven by practices and institutional entrepreneurs: transformation of the (institutional) logic requires change in practices (and subsequently, actors’ sense-making and behaviour), which can be championed by institutional entrepreneurs. While their study is limited to organisational analysis and discounts the environmental impact on transformation, Skålén and Edvardsson (2015) illustrate the centrality of practice and institutional entrepreneurs, and how conflict emanates from positions and interests of the actors⁸.

The customer is located in a social context and service ecosystem, where collaboration and interaction between the customer and her context can take place (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015). While already conceptualised in the original Heinonen et al. (2010) article, *CDL extensions* (e.g. Arantola-Hattab, 2015; Heinonen et al., 2013; Medberg and Heinonen, 2004; Rihova et al., 2014) empirically elaborate on the customer in their life settings, as encompassing several interconnected individuals (such as families) and shared practices (e.g. in a festival setting). As these influences of social embedding and networks can be considered an issue beyond direct provider visibility and consequent influence, the fuzzy nature of market and relational realities is included, and the examination of context is, at least implicitly, not an exercise in simplification (cf. SL). Similar, yet more inclusive and less managerially oriented, research is conducted within consumer research.

What is entitled *collective forms of consumption* in figure 4 includes studies drawing from anthropology and sociology that discuss how interactions, meanings and practices structure value creation in consumer identities, consumer and brand communities and the consumer society (see Arnould, 2014; Cova and White, 2010; Dalli and Corciolani, 2008; Karababa and Kjeldgaard, 2014; Muñiz and Schau, 2005; O’Guinn and Muñiz, 2005; Peñaloza and Venkatesh, 2006; Venkatesh and Peñaloza, 2014). Brand communities are one of the pronounced instances of collective organisation in marketing literature and relate to value creation. In brand communities, the ‘investment’ made by participants materialises in a central ideology, logic, and/or object; a particular social order and shared identities and practices (see figure 1). O’Guinn and Muñiz (2005, p.

⁸ Skålén and Edvardsson’s (2016) study provides an important extension to discussion of disparate institutional logics and arrangements. The internal and external structures, power struggles and actors conflicting understanding and logics will be extended upon the following chapter 3, recounting the collective–conflictual framework.

256) elaborate the aforementioned elements of brand communities as ‘consciousness of kind, evidence of rituals and traditions, and a sense of obligation to the community and its members’. Essentially, these community mechanisms translate into perceptions, ideas, and rules about membership, demeanour and beliefs, and reciprocities, which in turn define the boundaries of the community – that is, who we are, and who others are (cf. Ewing et al., 2013; Muñiz and Schau, 2005).

Schau and her co-authors (2009) were among the first to use practice theory to study value creation in consumer collectives, pointing out the intersubjective element in collective practices. Brand community value creation practices ‘work closely together as a process of collective value creation’ (Schau et al., 2009, p. 35). Pongsakornrungsilp and Schroeder (2011) discuss collective co-consuming behaviour as interactive value co-creation. In these communities, consumers inhabit the double role of beneficiary and provider. Such a role is elsewhere defined as *prosumer* (producer–consumer, Toffler, 1980; see also Cova and Cova, 2012; Ritzer, 2014; Ritzer and Jurgenson, 2010), who can become ‘agents of their own [marketplace/consuming/producing] destinies’ (Cova and Cova, 2012, p. 149). Collectively, these groups of prosumers pursue both individual and collective goals, leading to ‘...an emerging form or organization where consumers develop relationships that empower them as a group’ (Pongsakornrungsilp and Schroeder, 2011, p. 319). Interactive value creation is proposed to work to hinder individuals and groups from becoming exploited in their roles as customers and co-creators of value. Cova and Paraque’s (2012) account on value co-creation and co-destruction elaborates on a virtuous brand process, wherein brand community practices co-create a brand and contribute to its valuation, which the brand-owning organisation can subsequently monetise. Yet, such harmonious processes can become conflictual, when over-estimation of brand value and consumer loyalty goes together with excessive monetarisation and consumer/community exploitation. Thus, there is significant cross-over with these studies, which is what I outline as the fourth collective and conflictual quadrant in figure 4.

Value as a collective, social phenomenon has a clear connection to the social responsibility of corporations (Peñaloza and Mish, 2011). Relating back to Porter and Kramer’s (2011) shared value concept, critique has been put forward on the general naïveté of this approach, which relies on the benevolence, compliance and sociability on the part of corporate actors (Crane et al., 2014). For Crane and his co-authors, while the concept of shared value brings social orientation and regulation (i.e. governments) to the fore, managing the tension between social and economic goals subsists as a grand scale paradox. Discussions of corporate social responsibility (CSR) generally aim to address corporate activities balancing social, environmental, and economic considerations: here, value takes the form of both the process and the outcome (cf. Gummerus, 2013). In networks, ecosystems, and societal contexts, where different actors have different intents, outcomes of interaction can be conceptualised as containing a degree of perceivable, tangible value and impact on the host societies (Scott, 2004). Laczniak and Murphy (2012) draw on stakeholder theory in a realignment of marketing to consider and respond to societal impact of the conduct of marketing. With its normative ethics and macro-perspective, a stakeholder orientation signifies a departure from exclusively targeting customer and shareholder concerns (cf. Lusch and Webster, 2011). Instead, the fairness of allocating benefits and burdens to the members of a system through structure, policies, and practices is central (Laczniak and Murphy, 2008, 2012).

For Ind and Coates (2013, p. 92) individual willingness to collaborate can be harnessed in equality instead of dominance, with ‘...co-creation [becoming] a force for participation and democratisation that does create meaning for all’. *Stakeholder theory* affords a

perspective to understand negative implications (such as externalities or democratic deficiencies) in a value-creating system on a systemic, societal level. Yet, value creation literature engages with conflict only occasionally and more in the peripheral sense (e.g. conflict is not part of SDL axioms or foundational premises where the assumption of mutual benefit dominates). Some studies have engaged with the negative impacts of value (co-)creation. I will turn to these next.

2.4 Individual–conflictual value creation

Conflict as a concept has generally been treated unsystematically, and despite ample empirical evidence of inequitable and, at worst, exploitable exchanges and interactions. Value creation takes place in dynamic social settings, where social order, dominant logics and dispositions collide (see figure 1). Shifting concern, dissimilarity of experience, varying practices and different interests plant seeds for collisions, but also animate creativity and innovation (Arvidsson, 2009; Bridoux et al., 2011; Fyrberg Yngfalk, 2013; Normann, 2001; Skålén and Edvardsson, 2016; Varman et al., 2012; Vargo and Lusch, 2016). The dominant harmonious view can be seen to simplify the social dynamics of market exchange and interaction creating value. In a Bourdieusian field analysis of the relational dynamics in a metropolitan Turkish hairdressing salon, Üstüner and Thompson (2012) illustrate how the socio-economic and structural differences in the contemporary service economy lead to conflict between elite consumers and service workers, who engage in various status games to balance out their different positions. The social differences between actors on the marketplace is a sparsely theorised area: ‘...marketplace performances, particularly those that are situated in longer term consumer-service-provider relationships are multifaceted social interactions through which different forms of capital (economic, social, and cultural) are routinely exchanged and varying degrees of interpersonal familiarity and commitments to the relationship are established’ (Üstüner and Thompson, 2012, p. 797).

A number of studies further illustrate the conflictual dimensions in value creation, both in relation to discrete and continuous relationships. These studies illustrated incongruent interaction leading to *value co-destruction* (Echeverri and Skålén, 2011), and how participants in the value creation process becomes a victims of *exploitation* or confronted with other negative consequences, for instance, because of their position and subsequent relational power differences (Bonsu and Darmody, 2008; Cova and Dalli, 2009; Cova and Paraque, 2012; Zwick et al., 2008). For instance, by examining firm-consumer interaction in the new economy of virtual gaming platforms, Bonsu and Darmody (2008) found the idea of value co-creation to proclaim consumer empowerment, but in essence, functioning as strategic market control, whereby the corporation appropriates consumer ability and willingness of employing resources. Such consumer work and free labour is increasingly seen as a way in which the current economy works: as Fleming (2014) elaborates, free work, which typically existed in the private sphere of households, currently extends to all parts of life, as new ways of extracting value come to define contemporary capitalism (see also Graeber, 2013). Social media is a particularly illustrative context in relation to free work as the exploitation of consumers’ participation and prosumption in value creation becomes blurred. In the social media context, work is disguised as pleasurable and fun (‘playbour’; Scholz, 2013). Community participants’ creative production increases in value with each new participant and the content they add (Beverungen et al., 2015; Fuchs 2014; Slee, 2015; Taylor, 2014; Zwick & Bradshaw, 2016). This way, harnessing value through co-creation and co-production is paradigmatic for managing, controlling and appropriating consumer work (Cova and Dalli, 2009; Zwick et al., 2008).

Hence, value co-destruction literature is foundational in linking the individual and collective dimensions of figure 4. Plé and Chumpitaz Cáceres (2010, p. 431, emphasis added) defined co-destruction as an ‘...interactional process between *service systems* that results in a decline in at least one of the systems’ well-being’. As such, they acknowledge the systemic and disparate impacts of value co-destruction. Similarly, shifts in production and distribution systems (e.g. music streaming in Giesler, 2008, academic publishing in Parker et al., 2014a, and the sharing economy in Wahlen and Laamanen, 2017), firm-consumer collaboration (Cova et al., 2015; Fyrberg Yngfalk, 2013; Kelleher et al., 2010), and emergence and legitimatisation of industries (Humphreys, 2010) represent studies on market(ing) landscapes, where the impact of shifting and contradicting interests of different actors, fragmentation of processes, collaboration, confrontation and resistance and disharmonious outcomes are part of value creation. As such, these studies illustrate how (1) incongruent logics and subsequent practices lead to conflict on the market; (2) parties in such conflict use various practices to destabilise structure in a field, and (3) impact results to outcomes in the benefit or detriment of one (or more) of directly and/or indirectly linked participants. Both individual and collective dimensions of value creation, they traverse to the fourth quadrant of collective–conflictual value creation, as discussed below.

A further development in service research, transformative service research (TSR), advocates a broad, emergent perspective on the transformative capacity and remedial impact of service along the idea of ‘how services can and do improve or reduce the welfare of individuals, communities, nations, and the global ecosystem’ (Rosenbaum et al., 2011, p. 1). The perspective accounts for different actors, structures, practices and particularly outcomes in various service settings of the current service-dominated economy (cf. Anderson et al., 2013). Examining service in this manner developed from transformative consumer research, which examines social problems related to and emerging from consumption (e.g. Crockett et al., 2013). Due to the nature of service as the dominant mode of economic transaction in the contemporary society, and the omnipresence of service and services in the daily lives of individuals and their related communities, TSR developed as a separate research area examining the impact of service on the individual, collective and societal levels (Anderson et al., 2013; Ostrom et al., 2010). Although ‘TSR advocates concern for the well-being of consumers and employees—both collective and individual—as they are affected by services’ (Anderson et al., 2013, p. 1206), there is some obscurity as to how agency emerges for individuals and communities as service users in the everyday. Recently, Skálén and his co-authors (2015) illustrated the challenger role that actors can take in exchange relationships and service systems, whereby the inter-actor conflict and opportunities to transform social settings motivate such attempts for transformation. This links TSR with the view on value creation that the collective–conflictual approach accentuates.

3 COLLECTIVE–CONFLICTUAL VALUE CREATION

[A]ll forms of organizing are 'political', which is another way of saying that they are contested... (Parker et al., 2014b, p. 31)

All forms of organising are contested and contradictory, that is, neither universally good or evil in any particular arrangement: 'markets can be hugely helpful forms of reward and distribution in some circumstances, and communes can be oppressive and narrow places which crush individuals' (Parker et al., 2014b, p. 31). This chapter outlines what can be considered as the value creation phenomena in the collective–conflictual quadrant of the value creation theory map (see figure 4). To consider value creation as a collective and conflictual phenomenon, conflict, collective action and ensuing practices are utilised as analytical lenses in this dissertation. These elements and the indiscriminate outcomes to participant actors and their environments basically represent the politics of value creation.

Contestations of value, its creation and its social context is put forward in this dissertation as the politics of value creation (see figure 1). As mentioned in the discussion in the previous chapter and illustrated in figure 4, the literature around collective and communal forms of value creation and the darker tones of value creation practices are pointing to the direction advocated here. For developing a dominant logic of marketing, Peñaloza and Venkatesh (2006) were among the first to point to a host of issues, such as the impact of collectivities and power, that needed to be considered in particular. Indeed, subjectively-oriented, harmonious and experiential examinations of value creation omit collective, conflictual and contentious elements. Yet, this is not to say that these issues are universally missing in marketing literature. Political economy, network and consumer resistance approaches have a lineage in marketing literature and I will discuss these next.

Johan Arndt's (1983) political economy model extends the dominant microeconomic view to include '... authority and control patterns, distributions of power, conflict and conflict management, and external and internal determinants of institutional change ... [which are] linked to the structure and goals of social units and the influence of external power wielders and dominant internal interest groups' (Arndt, 1983, p. 52). Arndt elaborates on the exchange of (scarce) resources in social units such as organisations, groups, and families. These comprise political coalitions between internal structures and external interest groups with partly common and partly conflicting goals, and activities that are collective, political, and conflictual. Arndt differentiates between polity and economy, that is, 'the power-and-control system of a social unit, a network of social units, or society [encompassing] both power and the values (ends) which power is used to achieve' and 'the productive exchange system of a social unit or society transforming "inputs" into "outputs"' (Arndt, 1983, p. 48), respectively. Analysis of these elements needs to be simultaneous, emphasising interdependencies in linkages and regulation. Alas, the PE model did not become very prominent, especially because it can be considered lacking clear operationalisability (e.g. Vargo and Lusch, 2016).

A network approach can similarly be argued to illustrate the structural and political construction of the politics of the marketplace (Håkansson, 2015; Thorelli, 1986). Lamenting a missing holistic approach to the study of markets and exchange, Thorelli (1986) discusses networks as the positions (nodes) and links (interactions) of actors consequently defining power and influence. Power illustrates how the polity – the political organism – is constructed and exercised through strategic use of power (influence) in everyday network relations. To understand networks, so the argument

goes, the ‘flows of power and information may actually be more important than those of money and utilities’ (Thorelli, 1986, p. 39). Network dynamics emerge in the intersection of network members’ (continuous) struggle for resources and the networks propensities towards stability and consensus, whereas membership processes of entry, positioning, repositioning and exit illustrate how the network members act upon these dynamics. Here, the network takes precedence over singular relationships, links and nodes, and thusly cannot be reduced to their sum. Neither can these relationships be considered without perceiving the opportunities, constraints and impacts embedded therein (Barile and Polese, 2010). The conflictual and negative impacts of networks (to wider environments as well) emerge in ‘the plethora of internal and external centrifugal and centripetal forces in the interplay among network members and in the network-environment interface’ (Thorelli, 1986, p. 43) where by a blissful equilibrium cannot be attained, nor do market interactions necessarily serve the public interest, while they might serve the interests of the network members. In essence, the network approach illustrates an approach to examine the structural construction of markets (positions, links) and its dynamic mechanisms (power, influence, trust, membership, re/negotiations, environments and external shocks) (see also Håkansson, 2015).

In communal consumption, coercive processes from the firm can lead to a collective resistance from the community, such as the creation of rival products and counter-brand communities (Cova and While, 2010). Conflict also emerges within the social contexts as large corporations and their actions become targets of social action. Here, mobilisation against corporations has relied on authorities and the public converging around shared ideology, such as in the case of anti-consumption protest against Coca-Cola in India that drew on national identity (Varman and Belk, 2009) or inventive and highly visible community practices, such as adbusting (Thompson et al., 2006). Studies on Jeep and Hummer drivers illustrate how communities respond to challenges to their lifestyles and community practices (Luedicke et al., 2010; Rosenbaum, 2013). Communities attempt to not only construct strong identities and perceptions of their practices, such as off-roading as connecting with nature, but discredit their adversaries as ‘tree-huggers’, ‘un-Americans’ or whatever the fitting description is further influencing larger audiences perceptions of the focal group, its practices and their legitimacy. As Rosenbaum (2013) describes, groups also garner support from authorities by engaging in political campaigning. Beyond challenging and attempting to neutralise the effects of contention, Cova and D’Antone (2016) illustrate how community members may interiorise competing ideologies, identity or brand claims leading to an internal conflict, whereby the position of the brand changes in their mind and in their action. Alternatively, consumers can change allegiances and adhere to the new ideology, thereby taking on the challenger perspective.

Accordingly, brands can mobilise as powerful, organised and political collectivities that lobby for social changes (O’Guinn and Muñiz, 2015). The general social benefit of such change actions can be contested, as illustrated by the recent difficulties regarding the regulation of sharing and collaborative economies (e.g. Slee, 2015). Particularly the global players, such as AirBnB and Uber, are meeting only (rather) lethargic supranational and national governance attempts (see European Commission, 2016a, b; U.S. Department of Commerce, 2016), whereas local regulation attempts can be thwarted by organising loyal consumers. AirBnB was particularly successful in this – the company used community organisers from Barack Obama’s presidential campaign and grassroots mobilising (social movement practices) practices to generate local groups with their own community leaders to protest against and eventually overturn Proposition F that would have restricted short-term rental activities in the city of San Francisco (Balaram, 2016).

Needless to say, neighbourhoods faced with increasing levels of short-term rentals fear raising housing prices and the loss of local neighbourhood character.

Recently several contributions to theorisation of value creation have pointed out the possible negative aspects of value creation (Grönroos and Gummerus, 2015; Gummerus, 2013; Vargo and Lusch, 2008). Yet, though there is some evidence of dissonance and collectivism in SL and CDL, these generally do not extend far enough to elaborate issues relevant to this quadrant of value creation literature. Furthermore, they are unreservedly business perspectives aiming to improve the performance of the economic enterprise (Grönroos and Gummerus, 2015; Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015) and as such, are limited in capacity to explicate the socio-political implications that are relevant here alongside economic implications. In contrast, Vargo and Lusch (2008, p. 6; also Vargo and Lusch, 2016) perceive SDL as the foundation for a new theory of economics and society. With this grand theory aspiration (Vargo and Lusch, 2016), it is natural that the horizon of value creation is expanded beyond individualised and harmonious processes and outcomes; the horizon is also moving beyond commercial contexts (already in Vargo and Lusch, 2008; more pronouncedly in Lusch and Vargo, 2014). Consequently, conceptualisations need sensitisation to differing logics, relational dynamics and potential/actual outcomes that can defy the canon of collaboration in mutual benefit.

Drawing from institutional theory, Vargo and Lusch conceive SDL as a ‘...narrative of cooperation and coordination in ecosystems, as well as the reconciliation of conflict between them’ (Vargo and Lusch, 2016, p. 13); yet, their monolithic view of institutions and a libertarian view on economic activity in contemporary society⁹ leaves the collective–conflictual quadrant rife with potential to extend the theories in value creation, particularly in connection to SDL. For instance, Pascale Trompette (2013) elaborates how the institutionalisation and marketisation of the French funeral economy illustrates the politics of value as it ‘...reflects the setting up of arrangements among the stakeholders in connecting economic value to political concerns and social values’ (Trompette, 2013, p. 370). In a recent article, Corvellec and Hultman (2014) discuss regimes of value by focusing on the politics of value in waste management and the discrepancy between various frameworks of valuation in a social setting. Regimes of value are ‘established understandings of what matters as opposed to what does not’ (Corvellec and Hultman, 2014, p. 359) relative to the practical, political, economic and environmental considerations of various actors that are incommensurable and/or at odds. Beyond this study, there is scant research that attempts an analysis and empirical elaboration of conflictual logics in SDL literature (see Skålén and Edvardsson, 2016 for an exemption). Even fewer studies (Humphreys, 2010; Laamanen and Skålén, 2015; Palmer et al., 2014; Skålén et al., 2015) elaborate on the mechanisms towards change.

Antagonism embedded in the functions of capitalism (a compelling institution and institutional arrangement itself, in which SDL is certainly embedded) entails that ‘...forms of interaction can include opposition, co-optation, opportunism, coercion and even violence’ (Laamanen and Skålén, 2015, p. 384). Humphreys (2010), Laamanen and Skålén (2015), and Laamanen et al. (2015) refer to framing, and the how frames as expressions of collective action spell out what matters to the collectivity and why (see similarity to regimes of value above). Humphreys (2010) discusses framing relative to generating legitimacy in a process that moves through establishing, diffusing, and validating innovation locally and nationally. Setting their empirical analysis in complementary currencies, Laamanen and his co-authors (2015) show how various

⁹ In Vargo and Lusch (2016), this comes out particularly in the insistence of mutuality/mutual benefit in a growth economy framework.

framing practices (i.e. prognostic, diagnostic and motivational framings) generate both the expression of collective valuation and a call for action to challenge local and societal inequalities. Several actors including consumer activist groups, academic workers, record companies, publishing houses, NGOs, public institutions and even political parties are involved in fierce disagreement based on incommensurable regimes of value, repressive institutional arrangements, continuous technological (or other) change, and possibilities to collectively address these grievances. Political agendas and collective action have the possibility to alter not only the dynamics of value-creating relationships, but also the institutional arrangements, where such relations are contained. Studies such (this is in contrast particularly with Lusch and Vargo, 2014, and Vargo and Lusch 2016).

Markets can be considered as similar socially constructed, reproducible roles structures that are influenced by rules, understandings, and authority structures such as institutions (Fligstein, 2001a; Fligstein and Calder, 2015; see also Ahrne and Brunsson, 2011). To Fligstein and Calder (2015), this observation lays the foundation to the most central issues in the sociology of markets, namely, their evolution (i.e. emergence, transformation, termination etc.), stability, and governance structures (i.a. authority structures that construct and maintain markets). Formal power structures and authoritative intervention (such as from governments or other authorities) create stability. As such, stability is provided through rules and hierarchies as foundations of social order and organisation (e.g. Ahrne and Brunsson, 2011; Ahrne et al., 2015; Fligstein, 2001a; Fligstein and Calder, 2015).

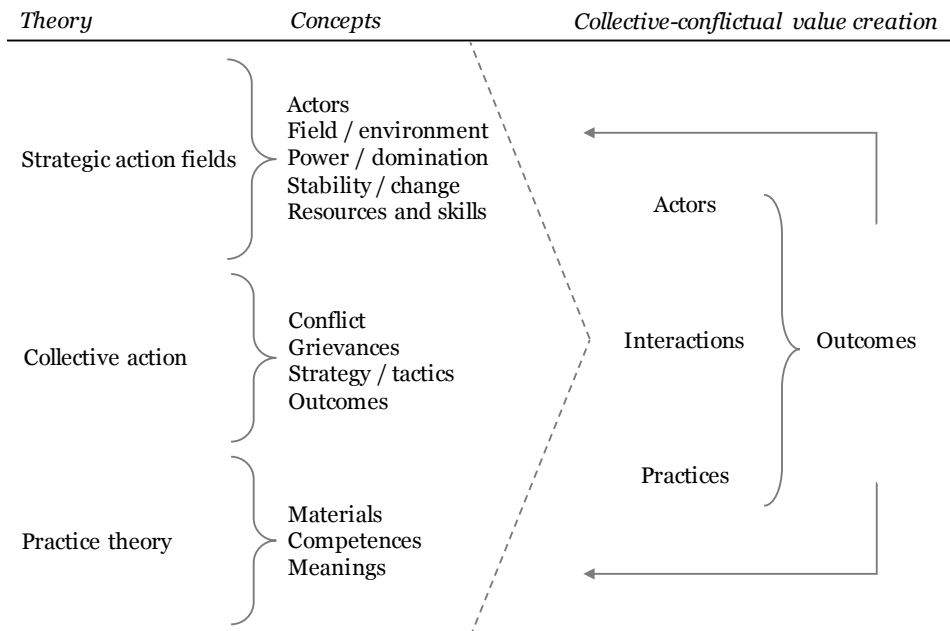


Figure 5 Theoretical foundation of collective–conflictual value creation

Addressing how change comes about, how domination can be accounted for, and how a societal/institutional outlook can assume more than stability in social order, in the following chapters, I will present the theoretical background in sociological literature (see figure 5) that draws on the strategic action field theory and the sociology of collective action in social movements. These literatures can be used to explain why and under what conditions extant social order becomes challenged, and what methods can be used to understand the mechanisms that bring individuals together to act in a particular way, engaging in particular practices. The collective–conflictual framework also adds to the current discussion on institutional logics in value creation by considering the processes of (re)negotiating settlements in value-creating arrangements.

3.1 Strategic action fields

The politics of value, the ordering of its creation and emergence through interaction and actors' strategic practice can be conceptualised and bounded in various ways. As I have discussed above, previous studies have considered this in terms of constellations, communities, networks and (service) systems. The concept of strategic action fields delineating the 'social arena where something is at stake and actors come to engage in social action with other actors under a set of common understandings and with a set of resources that help define the social positions in the field' (Fligstein 2013, p. 40) is central to my approach. Thus, resources and common understandings both create and recreate the social dynamics of a particular field. In the theory of fields (Fligstein 2013; Fligstein and McAdam, 2012), understanding of the purpose of the field and the social skill required to maintain or change the field connect to the field's general dynamics¹⁰

A strategic action field, SAF, (Fligstein and McAdam, 2012: 9; see also Fligstein, 2013 and Zeitz, 1980) is

a constructed mesolevel social order in which actors (who can be individual or collective) are attuned to and interact with one another on the basis of shared (which is not to say consensual) understandings about the purposes of the field, relationships to others in the field (including who has power and why), and the rules of governing legitimate action in the field

An SAF can take many guises, such as, '...an organization, a brand community, a municipality, a social movement or any other social collectivity nested in an environment made up of other SAFs providing the focal SAF and its actors with resources and governance structures' (Laamanen and Skälén, 2015, p. 385). Aligning with Bourdieu's field approach (1984; see also Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), SAFs are intertwined and interdependent: stakes and positions in one shared context come to be enmeshed in multiple other spaces. Thus, SAFs bridge the macro-societal and micro-individual levels.

The constitution of an SAF and its relations to the environment is elaborated in figure 6. The central actors in a field are incumbents and challengers: Fligstein and McAdam (2012) respectively define these as power wielders interested and heavily invested in the dominant organisation of a field, and those in a less influential and privileged position. The recursive nature of stability and conflict, as portrayed in the middle of figure 6, is central to field dynamics. Domination and contestation underscore the balance between

¹⁰ The division of field dynamics into understandings (of purpose), (a set of) resources and the social skill of the actors resembles Shove et al. (2012) division of social practice into material, competence and meaning (semiotic) elements.

these two dimensions – how a field agreement is maintained in light of the differences between incumbents and challengers, their practice repertoires, goals and so on.

The field approach illustrates the significance of surroundings, of fields and environments. For instance, the attribution of power and position is cemented by authorities, who (often) support the position and interests of incumbents as the ruling group in a setting. Collective action environments interact with and influence field dynamics. According to Rucht (2004), they consequently need to be understood in relational terms: it would be erroneous to consider collective action as some sort of ‘...a two-party struggle between a (unified) movement and its (unified) opponent acting in some kind of a social vacuum’ (Rucht, 2004, p. 197). Rather, environments are complex arenas of allies and adversaries, who are not necessarily participating, but impact the dynamics and course of action in the field in some manner (McAdam and Scott, 2005; Rucht, 2004). Conceptualisations of environments encompass, amongst others, organisations, industries, sectors, networks, systems, markets and societies.

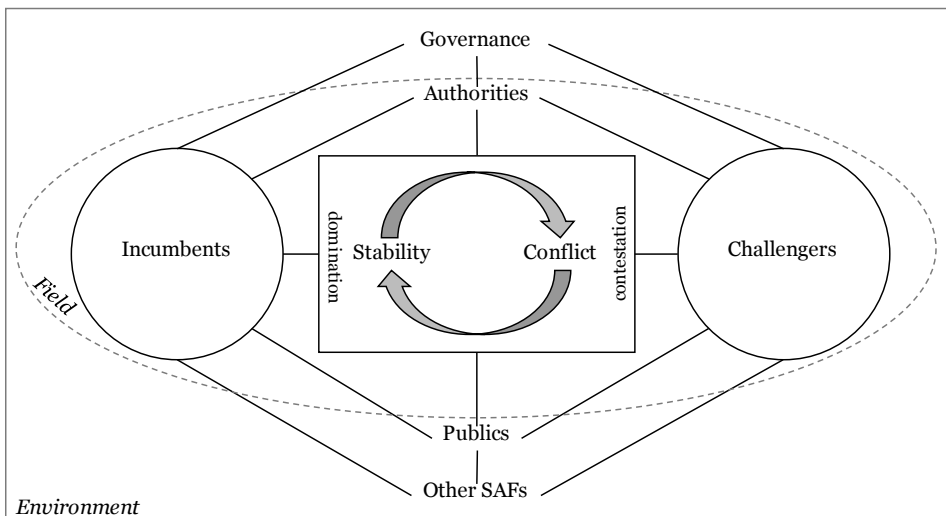


Figure 6 Actors, fields, and environments (Laamanen and Skälén, 2015, p. 386)

Actions in fields are strategic, in so far as they depend on social skill (or capacity for innovation) and the ability to account for and anticipate others' moves. Activity in an SAF has both structural and agentic elements (cf. Giddens, 1984). Where mutual understandings aim to uphold stability of fields and positions of the central actors vis-à-vis each other, a common understanding about the purposes and rules of the field is not a contract on a field's structural constitution; rather, a field delineates the possible. A field is a venue for multiple, contested understandings: instead of a consensual understanding, there are various interpretative frames related to the relative positions of actors (Fligstein and McAdam, 2012). To Fligstein (2013) ‘...conflict and change [are] far more common than the prevailing view of settled fields that is offered in institutional theory ... even in settled fields, the exact nature of what is at stake, what the resources are, who occupies which positions, and what constitutes reasonable moves, can at any moment be up for grabs’ (Fligstein, 2013, p. 43). Institutions and their logics are thus less tenacious (cf. Vargo and Lusch, 2016). In a similar vein, recent research illustrates

how multiple logics in organisations can exist in parallel (Besharov and Smith, 2014), or how institutional structures, perceived resilient to mobilisation, can successfully be challenged (Vaccaro and Palazzo, 2015). Resources and collective meanings function as control mechanisms (Fligstein, 2013) and rules provide templates to deciphering and guiding action of other actors that are members of the field.

Fields not only accommodate incremental changes but can also include radical transformations (Fligstein and McAdam, 2012; Lounsbury, 2005). Alternating with stability, episodes of contention may trigger transformation that reinstates the field order with extant or altered rules and power structures (Fligstein and McAdam, 2012; McAdam and Scott, 2005). Internal dynamics and external shocks can destabilise relations and offer the possibility to renegotiate field order, relational dynamics, and the relationship of the field to its environments (Fligstein and McAdam, 2012). Through their resources, resource-providing relationships and social skill, field actors (re)constitute and (re)negotiate the field order. The dominant actors, despite their material, cultural and political resources, 'must always contend with the resistance, the claims, the contention, "political" or otherwise, of the dominated' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 102; also see Graeber, 2013).

The challengers' position requires critical application of social skill to improve their standing in the field vis-à-vis the incumbent actors. This playing the field, making and expecting others' moves is called jockeying in the SAF vernacular. To engender change, challengers construct meaning and mobilise consequent action around grievances that represent a factual, perceived or even manipulated injustice (Buechler, 2011; Snow and Soule, 2010). In practice, instead of direct confrontation with incumbents, challengers might aim to mobilise moral and material solidarity and attend to political opportunities to their causes (cf. Fantasia, 1988; Rucht, 2004; Buechler, 2011; Zeitz, 1980). Strategic and tactical adaptation is often necessary to figure out 'how either get the "other" to cooperate or to effectively blunt or counter the "other's" advantage' (Fligstein and McAdam, 2012, p. 55). Yet, challenger practices, while confrontational, tend to be conservative (Meyer, 2007, p. 100). The 'ritualization of opposition' refers to challenger actions having a degree of predictability (Meyer, 2007, p. 101; see also Flesher Fominaya, 2014). This can be due to the threat of (violent) retaliation, but also related to the tendency of movements to replicate previously successful practices rather than innovate new ways; for instance, of making claims. What the particular nature and mechanisms of collective action are is discussed in further detail below.

3.2 Collective action

Collective action as basic human activity is so fundamental and broad that '[t]aken at face value, it could plausibly refer to *all* forms of human social action involving two or more people' (McAdam, 2007, p. 574, emphasis original). Communitarity, inclusion and participatory nature have long been the driving force behind collective activity and social movements promoting societal change. Some of the traditional social movements, such as the labour movement, have thrived from the times of the industrial revolution to our day. Others have emerged as responses to more contemporary issues, as the Occupy movement in response to the causes and effects of the malfunction of the financial markets and volatility of the economic policy. In this section, I will continue the discussion on collective action and particularly relate it to what challenger collectivities, such as social movements, do.

Classical texts on collective action consider how individual actors come together and are capable of engaging in the production of public (collective) good (Hirschman, 1970; Offe and Wiesenthal, 1980; Olson, 1971). The basic assumption in Mancur Olson's (1971) approach is rationality of participants. Consequentially, Olson questions whether the self-interested individual actor has a disposition to cooperate and collaborate in the creation of public good, if the good is universally available. The rational actor, according to this logic, would tend to free-ride. This behaviour can be counteracted, when groups offer selective, membership-requiring incentives to participants. For Hirschman (1970), the question is not only the optimal and equal distribution of collective good, but the nature of that good. Indeed, if there is a public good, then there is also public evil: '...what is a *public good for some* – say, a plentiful supply of police dogs and atomic bombs – may well be *judged a public evil by others in the same community*' (Hirschman, 1970, p. 101, emphasis added). Hirschman elaborates that involvement with the production and consumption of collective good may not be voluntary and rational. In some cases, exit may not be possible and the only way to influence the situation is through voicing a grievance. Offe and Wiesenthal (1980) extend upon the Olsonian logic of distribution and rationality by considering how the nature and outcome of collective action also depends on its form. Furthermore, they suggest the logic of collective action to be beyond reasoning around 'what is valuable': '...the mode of action and struggle cannot be informed by any purposive-rational calculation, but rather by a notion of the intrinsic value and preferability of a particular mode ... not to "get something", but to put ourselves in a position from which we can see better what it really is that we want to get and where it becomes possible to rid ourselves of illusory and distorted notions of our own interest' (Offe and Wiesenthal, 1980, p. 96).

Collective action can be defined as

any goal-directed [either institutionally sanctioned or illicit] activity engaged in jointly by two or more individuals ... [entailing] the pursuit of a common objective through joint action – that is, people working together in some fashion for a variety of reasons, often including the belief that doing so enhances the prospect of achieving the objective. (Snow et al., 2004b, p.6)

Doug McAdam (2007) expands this by involving resistance, whereby collective action stands for 'emergent and minimally coordinated action by two or more people that is motivated by a *desire to change* some aspect of social life or to *resist changes* proposed by others' (McAdam, 2007, p. 575, emphasis added). Collective action is taken here to stand for coordinated action of several actors with a common objective and shared collaborative and contentious practices for the achievement of a change. Collective action depends on mobilising grievances. Mobilising grievances as opposed to grievances that are ubiquitous and warrant no action are such that become shared and sufficiently serious conditions that lead not only to a collective voice (complaint), but to some kind of corrective and collective action, challenging some kind of authority (Snow and Soule, 2010). Mobilising grievances are rooted in inequalities: '...conflicts over claims to status, power, and other scarce resources among groups (social classes and racial, ethnic, and religious groups) differently situated within a social system' (Snow and Soule, 2010, p. 28).

Collective identity affords the individual a social location, resources and constraints that delineate a 'cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution' (Meyer, 2007, p. 85; Polletta and Jasper, 2001, p. 285). A collective identity defines boundaries (between us and them), generates a space for negotiation (engaging with other actors) and creates consciousness (why are things as they are, as well as why and how they need to change; Whooley, 2007). As such, identity is not only the being or the defining, but the doing of movement; beyond the way in which

it defines who and what the actors are and their interrelationships, it also impacts what they do in practice and in the everyday.

Challenges to authority can be individual or collective, as well as direct or indirect (see table 3 below). In contemporary societies, collective, overt challenge to authority often comes in the form of social movements, who are ‘...one of the principal social forms through which collectivities give voice to their grievances and concerns about the rights, welfare, and well-being of themselves and others by engaging in various types of collective action ... that dramatize those grievances and concerns and demand that something be done about them’ (Snow et al., 2004b, p. 3). Collective action here is of type 3 in table 3 – organised acts towards some form of authority. Where social movement activity is traditionally seen to confront political actors, recently, the primary targets of collective action in social movement have shifted towards cultural and economic authorities and institutions (Haenfler et al., 2012; Nash, 2010; Snow, 2004b).

Table 3 Types of action challenging authority (adapted from Snow and Soule, 2010, p. 10)

Level of action	Direct challenge	Indirect challenge
<i>Individual action</i>	Type 1: Appeals to authority for personal gains	Type 2: Everyday forms of resistance and withdrawal
<i>Collective action and social movements</i>	Type 3: Forms of targeted contestation	Type 4: Exiting from or divesting of authority

Collective action can be approached from several perspectives. These have long histories in social movement theory (see e.g. McAdam, 2007; Snow and Soule, 2010 for overviews). These approaches construct particular patterns of explanation looking at the structural mechanisms – conditions and causes – and activities and practices of individual and collective actors (e.g. McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Meyer, 2007; Snow and Benford, 1988). Central is nevertheless a grievance, which is commonly used to explain why people participate, how they enrol for action and work together for common goals. Clawson (2003) elaborates this: ‘with most political and community groups, people affiliate with the group because they agree with its goals ... the groups recruit among those who already share most of their views; it is not cost-effective to attempt to persuade those with alternative perspectives’ (Clawson, 2003, p. 172). This leads to groups being strong in convergence, yet problematically, they might give insignificant representation of central (and/or possible) constituencies (consider, for instance, various groups fighting for the rights of repressed or those otherwise without voice).

The manner in which protest (or any other form of contestation) is engaged in, is based on strategic choice. In mobilisation, larger numbers compensate for a lack of resources, whereas small groups can turn to dramatic action to compensate for mass mobilisation. To Meyer, strategy is illusive: activists often ‘talk strategy’, yet have a harder time actually figuring strategy and its functions out beyond particular tactical actions in combinations with mobilisation tools (such as claims) and sites of action. Strategic action thus includes relations in and between organisations within a certain specific field, and the preferences and ability to take risks (Jasper, 2014; Meyer, 2007). Consequently, much of the focus around action is on tactics. Activists attempt to pair their tactics with constituency resources, that is, to mobilise individuals and their resources a collective identity and action (Meyer, 2007, p. 85). Tactical choices are made on approach (e.g. violent-nonviolent, proactive-reactive), recruitment (e.g. inclusion of high-status participants),

temporality (e.g. choice to engage in action based on public opinion) and messages (e.g. Einwohner, 2006).

Movements are important agents for social change, especially related to cultural change mechanisms (e.g. Snow, 2004b; Snow et al., 2013). Shared meaning and identity is crucial for commitment and in welding the partners together: indeed, while ‘...specific actors may take the lead in meaning-management, these meanings must be shared, common and valued by all in the organization before collective action can occur’ (Sutherland et al., 2014, p.763). To influence opinion and mobilise internal and external resources, activists utilise the cultural practice of framing. Framing is the agentic practice of purposefully manipulating political, cultural and economic discourses to impact internal and external behaviours; it is a practice in politics of signification (see Snow, 2004a). Frames can thus be used to understand social skill. From a Goffmanian perspective (1986), frames organise experience in their function as schemata of interpretation to make sense of social realities and the everyday life. Frames articulate and assign relevance to various elements of activity (such as people, places, events, and activities). The relevance is established to mobilise action and human/material resources. Framing then aims to ‘...assign meaning to and interpret relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists (Snow and Benford, 1988, p. 198).

For McCammon and her co-authors (2007), ‘frames and the political and cultural environment in which they are expressed *work in combination* to produce a movement’s desired political outcome’ (McCammon et al., 2007, p. 726, emphasis original). Salience and the impact of a movement frame is determined to the extent to which it can draw, influence and manipulate hegemonic discourses within the (discursive) field. The success of a frame and framing is thus connected to a large set of cultural markers, values, beliefs and ideologies, and how these can be utilised to mobilise contention to replace dominant institutions and de-institutionalise extant institutional arrangements (Benford and Snow, 2000; Fligstein and McAdam, 2011, 2012; Katzenstein, 1990; Laamanen et al., 2015; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006; McCammon et al., 2007; Rao et al., 2000; Snow, 2004, a, b; Snow and Byrd, 2007).

Snow and Benford (1988; Benford and Snow, 2000) define the main tasks of framing in 1) diagnostic, 2) prognostic and 3) motivational. Through these strategic practices, movement activists articulate grievances, the rationale and forms of collective action, to adherents, bystanders (audiences), and antagonists (Hunt, Benford and Snow 1994; Snow and Benford, 1992; Williams, 2004). Diagnostic framing elaborates the problem/issue and focusses blame while prognostic frames elaborate ‘the remedial strategy and a solution, or at least some tactical action toward the desired goals’ (Laamanen et al., 2015, p. 461). Finally, motivational framing provides the impetus for participants to act. The content of these frames can be a cause of internal confrontation (e.g. with regards to what is the most salient issue to address); frame disputes are not only relevant to internal dynamics, but affect movement structures, interorganisational relations and strategic and tactical considerations and practices (Snow and Soule 2010).

Gahan and Pekarek (2013) illustrate the different levels of frames and framing processes (see figure 7), and how these connect between fields, movements (including their constituent organisations) and individuals, whose identity and experience is mobilised in a collective effort through resonant frames (combining three elements of injustice, agency and identity; see Williams, 2004). Framing engages the existential interests in the field. In other words, beyond the materialistic/rational view of collective action

(Olson, 1971), existential interests draw on meaning and identity ‘whereby socially skilled actors transcend their individual goals and perceptions of value to appeal to and engage with others in order to secure their support or cooperation in maintaining or changing a particular field’ (Laamanen and Skälén, 2015, p. 358). Lounsbury et al. (2003) use the concept of a field frame to illustrate how meaning systems and socio-economic contexts are shaped by political struggles. Field frames share ‘the durability and stickiness of an institutional logic, but ... is endogenous to a field of actors and is subject to challenge and modification’ (Lounsbury et al., 2003, p. 72). This correlates with Snow and Benford (1992), who use the idea of a master frame to distinguish between a more general, universal frame that supersedes collective action frames through their punctuation, attribution and articulation.

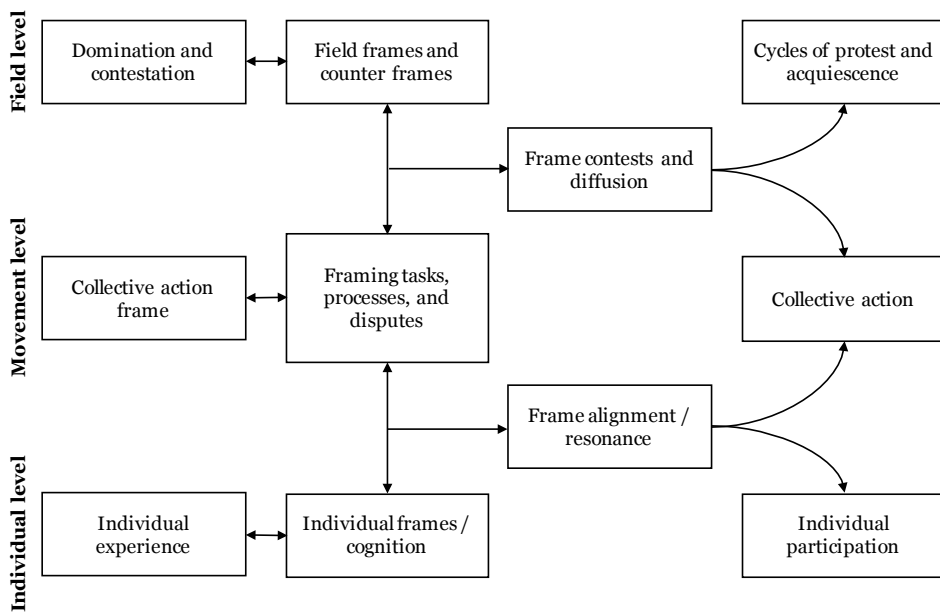


Figure 7 Framing processes (adapted from Gahan and Pekarek, 2013, p. 759)

The concept of field frame connects to but also contests the idea of institutional logics. Both share a foundation as ideational systems guiding meaning and action; yet the former ‘stresses challenging ideologies and conflicting belief and values’ whereas the latter ‘emphasises dominant ideologies’ (McAdam and Scott, 2005, p. 16). Unlike the institutional logic would suggest, meanings and understandings in a particular setting are not exogenous to those subjected to them, but rather provide an outlet for the sharing, construction and diffusion of understandings and models of appropriate action (Lounsbury et al., 2003). Undeniably, ‘meanings are variably contestable and negotiable ... open to debate and differential interpretation’ (Snow et al., 2007, p. 387), and activists can mobilise multiple ‘coexisting, often contradictory value propositions’ (Polletta, 1998, p. 142). Frames can be articulated in a way ‘... that assembles and collates slices of appropriated, observed, experienced, and/or recorded “reality” so that a particular event, trend, or issue is framed one way instead of another’ and elaborated

upon, thus making some issues or topics ‘...more salient in the array or hierarchy of group-relevant topics or issues ... [through the] practice of highlighting’ (Snow et al., 2013, p. 229, 232). As such, framing as the conflicting and competing claims about aspects of reality represents an interplay of incumbents, challengers and the environments as they jockey for position. Thus, framing can lead to institutional change.

Social movements are inherently ‘sloppy affairs ... [that require] harnessing the energies of diverse people and styles of action into a whole that can be presented coherently to a broader world’ (Meyer, 2007, p. 53). Due to the plurality of practitioners, it is often difficult to connect collective action practices and outcomes, particularly in cultural resistance, where ‘resources, tools, strategies and symbols ... are wielded by both dominant and dominated actors’ (Flesher Fominaya, 2014, p. 102). Movement outcomes can be elaborated through their consequences, which exist on intended-unintended and internal-external trajectories (Snow and Soule, 2010). These correspond to positive-negative outcomes and the location of the effect either within or beyond the boundaries of the collectivity, respectively.

Collective action can, on the one hand, positively impact its participants’ personal transformation, collective solidarity and identity through membership, commitment, and loyalty to the group. Internal-unintended consequences, on the other hand, strain this unity and the internal dynamics of the collectivity. Internal conflict emerges in disagreements on strategies and tactics (e.g. disputes about the use of particular ideas, framing issues, ideological direction, leadership and concentration of power; e.g. Laamanen and den Hond, 2015). On an individual level, personal and biographical variables and consequences of action can be used to determine the probability of participation and engagement (see Snow et al., 2004a). Moreover, people may engage in non-productive behaviours such as free riding on others’ engagement. Olson (1971) theorised this to be the case in larger groups where individual impact was less obvious to the collective activities, and unless coercion (e.g. rules and sanctions) or selective incentive are concomitantly used. Externally, a positive response from an opponent, authority, and/or audience represents an intended outcome. Collective action often rests on the promises of societal, political, economic, and/or cultural transformations as intended external consequence, while in the meantime attracting resources and maintaining resource-supplying relationships are further categories of external impact. Adverse external reactions often take the form of competition and opposition, resource rivalry, insurgent counteraction, or inattentive environments.

Internally and externally, collective action rarely succeeds in reaching and satisfying its goals in full. Collective goals become ‘transformed as they are translated, and today’s “victories” give rise to tomorrow’s disappointments, provocations, and – eventually – to new reform efforts’ (McAdam and Scott, 2005, p. 40). The paradox of collective action is in its teleological nature, whereby the collectivity becomes obsolete, as it achieves its goals. The alternative of not attaining goals of collective action consequently fails to satisfy the constituents. Also, any collective action can beget countermobilisation and counteraction. As such, collective action is pliant to opportunities and constraints set by social structures, resource inequalities, temporalities of action and opposition and levels of participation. This represents a Giddensian duality in both the structural ordering of a field and the role of actors in (re)producing it. Similarly, ideas of practices that stand for the shared conceptions of interaction in a given social setting can be used to understand collective action. Indeed, as mentioned above, field dynamics conceptualised as understandings, resources and social skill resemble how social practice can be seen in its elements of materials, competences and meanings (Shove et al., 2012). Practice theory is discussed in the following section.

3.3 Practice theory

As far as the sociologist is concerned practice is all there is to study and describe (Barnes, 2001, p. 25)

Practice theory as an alternative form of cultural theorising is particularly interested in the everyday reality by assigning socially shared knowledge and meaning as the vehicles of activity and social order. Reckwitz (2002) describes practice as routinised behaviour wherein several elements – bodily and mental activities, material objects, knowledge and knowhow and emotion – are interconnected. Practice further stands for knowledgeable collective action (Barnes, 2001; Gherardi, 2010, 2012; Orlikowski, 2010): as practice is reproduced in action, it requires people to ‘carry’ it. In general terms, practice is ‘embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organized around shared practical understandings’ (Schatzki, 2001, p. 2). Being shared and socially constructed (e.g. in language), practices are the foundational elements of the social and sociality (Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 1996). Shove et al. (2012) emphasise the role of material, competence and meaning and delineate these as the building blocks of practice. Materials are objects, infrastructures, tools, hardware and the body. Competence encompasses understanding and practical knowledgeability, whilst meaning consists of mental activities, emotion and motivational knowledge that ‘... represent the social and symbolic significance of participation at any one moment’ (Shove et al., 2012, p. 23). However, as collective action, practice transcends the individual: over time, practices form, configure and change in synthesis of practitioners, practice elements, conventions, institutions and contexts (Shove and Pantzar, 2007; Shove et al., 2012).

Given the centrality of doing, examining practice can provide a powerful analytic lens, since practice explains why collectivities act and organise in a particular way. Collective action identities and practices come to define a group from outsiders and forces in their everyday contexts that are the cause of shared grievances. As established above, collective action is made out of teleological practices engaged in by a sufficient number of people in the belief that their engagement in these practices, such as sharing resources, enhances their prospects of achieving change or attaining their goal (cf. Della Porta and Diani, 2006; Snow et al., 2004b). Collective action depends on not only cooperation, but also the ability of individual activists and activist groups to convince others of the existence of problems, the collective efforts needed to solve these and that collective action will succeed. Practice can be considered in its strategic, as well as its everyday nature.

Three particular research modes are available for envisioning practice: 1) practice as phenomenon, 2) practice as perspective and 3) practice as philosophy (Orlikowski, 2010). These approaches are not mutually exclusive, but rather illustrate alignment and focus (cf. Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011). They exist on an ontological continuum, a sort of consequence, wherein the perspective enlarges from phenomenon to philosophy. Firstly, practice as a phenomenon considers what happens in practice in everyday activities of organising as well as their outcomes. (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011; Orlikowski, 2010) Such an inquiry is empirically driven, that is, to understand reality is to engage with it in empirical terms. Secondly, practice as perspective is enquiry into the routine character of everyday life that constructs, produces, reproduces and changes the structural features in the social arena over time. The key is in understanding how practices shape reality through interactions and understandings with intended and unintended consequences (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011; Orlikowski, 2010). Finally, practice as philosophy centres around an ontological view, which implies that reality is constructed through practice. In this view, dynamic arrangements of human and non-human actors are in continuous association, enacting the social in practice (Orlikowski,

2010), an idea close to material semiotics and the actor-network-theory (see e.g. Gherardi, 2010; Latour, 2005; Law, 1992, 2009). This view implies that reality is in a flux and constituted in heterogeneous networks thereby rejecting the realist and social constructionist ontologies of reality: being external to human agency or being socially constructed, respectively. (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011).

To analyse a value creating field, a practice approach follows the second mode. It allows zooming-in and between the structure and dynamics of field relations. Practice theoretical approaches in this vein have been used in to theorise the nature of consumption (Warde, 2005) and consumer activism (Wahlen and Laamanen, 2015). Marketing approaches (particularly in the SDL and CCT traditions) have examined relational interactions (Echeverri and Skälén, 2011), marketing-as-practice (Skälén and Hackley, 2011) and value creation in individual, collective and societal settings (Fyrberg Yngfalk, 2013; Hartmann et al., 2015; Holttinen, 2010; Korkman, 2006; Pongsakornrungsilp and Schroeder, 2011; Schau et al., 2009). Organisation studies use practice approaches to examine strategising (Laine and Vaara, 2007; Vaara and Whittington, 2012), prefigurative politics (Maeckelbergh, 2009, 2011; Yates, 2015) as well as institutional (Katila et al., 2015) and technological (Gherardi, 2010) changes.

Organisations themselves are bundles of practices, structured spatial-temporal manifolds of action within the bounds of particular material arrangements. As an organisation happens, it becomes performed through its constituent actions governed by the structures (rules and ordering), and the material world is integrated into the actions. Because organisations happen in a particular spatial-temporal space and in full complexity and variety, experiencing an organisation as it is happening is not possible (Kemmis, 2010; Schatzki, 2006). It is nevertheless possible to experience constituent actions of organisational 'happening' and make inferences of the rest. A practice approach in organisations considers individual activities as being embedded and enacted in a web of social practices with individual actors as carriers of practice (Reckwitz, 2002; Vaara and Whittington, 2012). Strategic work as practice generates foundational institutions for organisational knowledge translated to and materialising in documents, organisational structures and ways of working. Activities also (re)construct practice beyond organisational boundaries, contributing to change in social realities (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011; Shove et al., 2012).

Giving and making sense of behaviours and experiences in part constitutes the melange of the strategic practice of collective action. Practices are the tools for praxis (practice), which entails the whole variety of (contextually bound and situated) human action (Reckwitz, 2002). Practitioners are the carriers of practices, involved in or seeking to influence the praxis (Vaara and Whittington, 2012). Practices, praxis and practitioners are often intertwined in analysis of a phenomenon. Strategising comprises of '...more or less deliberate strategy formulation, the organizing work involved in the implementation of strategies, and all the other activities that lead to the emergence of organisational strategies, conscious or not' (Vaara and Whittington, 2012, p. 3). In organisations where activities are based on representative democracy, strategising tends to focus on the dialogic and collective decision-making processes in generating knowledge and ensuing action (cf. Maeckelbergh, 2009, 2011). Practices and practitioners are politically embedded, through which organisational practice becomes political in how it is framed, exercised, and resisted (see Kaplan, 2008).

Practices, as institutions, are arguably a human and social construction (Geiger, 2009; North, 1991). Practices may become ideological (and consequently difficult to become conscious of and critique) as they naturalise and realise in routines as part of the

practitioner's selfhood (Biernacki, 2007). The same process of naturalisation happens to take place in institutions. Their pervasiveness depends on the belief that institutions and their conventions – such as practices – have always been there: as Battilana (2006) elaborates, this is ‘...because most often those who are constrained by institutions, and those who initially created these institutions, are not the same’ (Battilana, 2006, p. 645). The ‘human’ origin of institutions and practices becomes elusive and may appear as ordained by a higher power.

While practice can be institutionalised and institutionalising inasmuch as it stabilises meanings and doing¹¹, practices promote the (re)making of organisations and institutions. This dynamic view of institutions is, according to Nicolini (2012) closely related to institutional work, which is ‘the purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions’ (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006, p. 215). Practice and practicing is the (re)production, tweaking and resisting, and sometimes contending and disrupting existing structures and institutions. According to Geiger (2009), practice theoretical inquiry is not only interested in ‘...what people do in organizations but rather try to answer the questions why and how practices continue to be practised in organizations, which normative and institutionalizing power they unfold and how they are changed (mended) and their implicit norms are questioned and reflected’ (Geiger, 2009, p. 140). Practices are reflexive: participants observe themselves and others engaging in practice and change their behaviour in the future accordingly, that is, reflect upon what is taking place (Kemmis, 2010).

Change is thus essential to practice, yet empirical studies of how practices change are few (cf. Southerton et al., 2012). Some recent work has illustrated how institutional change comes about in practice. Katila and her co-authors (2015) through memory work illustrated how local practices of becoming an academic are different over time and ripe with resistance. The relations and (ongoing) negotiations between actors within the institutional context of higher education in Finland showed how practitioners could locally engage in resistance of translocal influences and economic-political pressures (particularly neoliberalism). Their analysis of the local level gives insight into confined resistance practices, yet are not more indicative of a larger societal transformation. In a similar vein, in their study, Bjerregaard and Klitmøller (2016) illustrate the conflicts in practice between various sites of the multinational corporation, particularly the headquarters and national subsidiaries. The authors illustrate how configuring translocal practice through practice transfer often fails because of local emergence and alteration, and the various conflicts and politics that influence any intra-organisational configuration of practice. Practice should, according to Bjerregaard and Klitmøller (2016), be positioned vis-à-vis politics and conflict: how the actors’ immediate context and social embedding influence how they can draw on various elements that make up practice, and how their practice is simultaneously shaped by these social and contextual conditions. Actors, when situated in various spaces, shape how conflict and cooperation takes place within the local and translocal in organisational practice.

Practice approaches to conflict reveal the internal life of organisational/societal structures and processes, and how their enactment demonstrates agency. Practice emerges in the intersection of ongoing, temporal reconstruction of a social order (such as society, organisation, or work) influenced by multiple societal and local relations that are ‘...actively stabilising, enacting or challenging the organizational practices and structures within which actors operate in the course of everyday work of organizing and strategizing’ (Bjerregaard and Klitmøller, 2016, p.4). In her study of the

¹¹ Cf. Practices as stabilising in Vargo and Lusch (2016).

alterglobalisation movement, Maeckelbergh (2009, 2011) illustrates how prefigurative politics and practices, such as horizontality, are used collectively as a tool to imagine but also guide what the collectivity does. Doing prefiguratively is a principle of democratic organising that aims to construct the world as we want it in the future by how we enact it today. Consequently, what and how is done becomes more important than what the organisation is in writing (e.g. constitutions or meeting minutes) or is individually perceived by the participants. Considering practice in a more cumulative manner, Wahlen and Laamanen (2015) illustrate the politics of the everyday in everyday activities, and a collective resistance of consumers have ‘...on the one hand spatial, temporal and praxeological relevance ... on the other hand [are] of [a] collective, contentious and ideological nature’ (Wahlen and Laamanen, 2015, p. 398). However, even given the collective implications (outcomes) of the practice, how the individual and collective meet, are aggregated and their deconstructed separation remains an open question.

3.4 Collective–conflictual value creation framework

Drawing from the above, value creation is a bundle of actors, skills, frames, meanings and materials coming together in a teleological practice. This connects well with the SAF approach and collective action and combines to form the basis to what is the collective–conflictual value creation framework presented next. In an effort to construct a theoretical framework for value creation, Laamanen and Skålén (2015) drew from the field theory (Fligstein, 2001b, 2013; Fligstein and McAdam, 2011, 2012) to elaborate a framework of collective–conflictual value creation. Table 4 summarises the conceptual framework of collective–conflictual value creation, in which actors, interactions, practices, and outcomes are the key interrelating components¹².

As established above, the bulk of existing studies in value creation are primarily skewed to unitary understanding. While SDL currently gravitates towards more holistic, systemic and collective purviews, and multiple studies may examine value creation on different levels (i.e. zoom out; see e.g. Leroy et al., 2013; Vargo and Lusch, 2016), the common assumption is of stability and harmony. Some studies (Bonsu and Darmody, 2008; Cova and Dalli, 2009; Echeverri and Skålén, 2011; Zwick et al., 2008) discuss negative effects of value creation and the discourse, yet fewer still, collective disharmony (Laamanen and Skålén, 2015; Palmer et al., 2014; Skålén et al., 2015), leaving a conflictual blind spot in the theory. As the previous and current chapter attempt to establish, a conceptual distinction of the individual–collective and harmonious–conflictual dimensions in value creation can assist in augmenting current theory. In agreement with Laamanen and Skålén (2015; see also Arndt, 1983, p. 54), social contexts including their inherent power and conflict issues offer ‘...a salient avenue for further critical analysis of value co-creation taking on the theoretical fetishism of mutual benefit and the romancing value co-creation’ (Laamanen and Skålén, 2015, p. 396).

Laamanen and Skålén’s (2015) approach of examining value co-creation in collective settings also contributes a critique of collaboration. While collaboration is an important element in collective action, which after settlement is the probable outcome of field friction, the sociological approaches to conflict inform us that it is neither the only, nor the dominant form of interaction. Tendencies for cooperation, competition and conflict can be intertwined (Deutsch, 1973; Zeitz, 1980), leading to collaborative and consensual, but also contentious, coercive, and co-optative practice (see e.g. Soule, 2012; van Wijk et

¹² The following chapters 3.4 is a moderately revised version of Laamanen and Skålén’s (2015) discussion on the nature of collective–conflictual value creation (p. 389–394).

al., 2013). These emerge from conflict-embedded actors' goals, field set-up, and environmental dynamics.

Table 4 Conceptual framework of collective–conflictual value creation (adapted from Laamanen and Skälén, 2015, p. 394)

Components	Key concepts	Implications to value creation
<i>Actors</i>	Incumbents Challengers Authorities Governance structures Publics Field - environment	Incumbent and challenger groups engage in strategic collective action in a social context of SAFs and their environment. Conflictual value creation ensues collectivities' disparate regimes of value and goals. Authorities, governance structures, publics and other SAFs provide support (e.g. legitimacy and resources) as well as external shocks to value creation practices.
<i>Interactions</i>	Unequal power relations Domination - contestation	Interactions are based on varying regimes of value. Power differences reify in domination and contestation.
<i>Practices</i>	Collaborative – contentious practice repertoires Congruent/incongruent enactment Collective action	Collectivities draw on resources, understandings and meanings to frame and mobilise support and activities that maintain or challenge the status quo. Collective action practices prompt conflict that offsets cycles of contentious action and counteraction. Conflict is an effect of actors enacting practices incongruently or actors invoking contentious value creation practices.
<i>Outcomes</i>	Positive – negative Incremental – substantial Compromise	Outcomes have implications on collective and systemic levels, and can have positive and negative consequences for incumbents, challengers and environments. Value is arbitrated between actors leading to incremental or substantial change. Thus, resettling a field is often a compromise whereby conflict remains perpetual.

Along with the differentiation of grievances as ubiquitous and mobilising, conflict can be examined either as a mechanism (having a role) or essential (explaining the nature) in social life and social phenomena. In value creation literature to date, conflict has been conceptualised in the former quality, as a variable in value-creating processes and outcomes. In this study, conflict is perceived as part of the nature of value creation and further reflected in the approach taken in this study for theorising collective–conflictual value creation in fields of strategic action. The notion of SAF allows expanding the epicentre of investigation from between actors to the dynamic interplay of environments and practices of social construction. The environment, where actors draw resources, skills and support from, is not invisible or beyond the actions or influence of either party, thereby warranting the contexts a less static, instrumental or interchangeable nature (cf.

Arndt, 1983). From the conflictual point of view, how the context influences interaction becomes a central empirical issue (see also Edvardsson et al., 2011). According to SDL, resources and skills are shared in a service for service interaction, yet a conflictual version of interaction includes withholding of resources and skills and perhaps utilising these to overturn inequitable power relations.

The collective–conflictual value creation framework outlined here also facilitates further ontological scrutiny of the ideological and political implications of value creation. The SAF theory builds on the bearing of ideology, politics, and the social skill needed in framing ideological and political claims. Successful manipulation of either can allow for and sustain collective action, influence tactics and work towards the attainment of collective goals (cf. den Hond and de Bakker, 2007). Challengers in SAFs have a particular interest in affecting social order and power relations either by inflicting change or aiming to maintain its current construction. By drawing on and manipulating social, cultural and political resources, SAF actors directly influence the conditions of their value creation activities.

3.4.1 Actors

In line with some previous research on the collective nature of value creation (Edvardsson et al., 2011, 2012; Heinonen et al., 2010; Schau et al., 2009) and politics of value regimes (Corvellec and Hultman, 2014), the framework is based on viewing value-creating actors in social context. Uniquely, the framework divides actors into incumbents and challengers based on their positions of field dominance: collaboration and conflict between the actors here becomes key to analysis (cf. van Wijk et al., 2013).

Previous research conceptualises the impact of the configuration of actors and resources in a social context on the value creation activities. Here, actors' practices are an effect of social structures (e.g. power, norms, cognitive schemes etcetera) and actors' reflexive agency (Edvardsson et al., 2012). Pointing out the duality of action does not however illustrate the nature and character of an actor's agency, that is, why actors engage in particular value-creating interactions or practices, or assist in analysing power or conflict (such as structures or ideologies of domination). The collective–conflictual value creation framework can be utilised to explain agency in what is often a persistent conflict between challengers and incumbents. Incumbents, often supported by authorities, act to protect the social order of the field that defends their dominant position. Challengers are driven to improve their subjugated position in the field by replacing that order. In this frame, value creation practices or parts thereof emerge as a conflict between incumbents and challengers labouring to realise their respective interests. Palmer and his co-authors (2014) recount web-based social movement activist use of rhetorical tools to destabilise and delegitimise Tesco's marketing strategy. Palmer et al. (2014) point out to incumbent strategy as a stabilising and controlling force in actors' relationships, and how multiple actors (such as consumers and social movement groups) can contest these stabilising effects: '... [the] role that is played by an array of actors forming a social movement presents an interesting, but overlooked, area that has particular relevance to understanding marketing strategy as an ongoing forming effort' (Palmer et al., 2014, p. 384).

Following SAF theory (Fligstein and McAdam, 2012), incumbent actors exercise disproportionate influence to the field, reflecting their dominant position and influence over social order. Challengers, on the other hand, have an alternative vision of the field. Due to their subordinate position, challengers often use extra-institutional means to

challenge the power of the incumbents (Fligstein and McAdam, 2012). Authorities and governance structures aim to further stabilise the value-creating field. Stability emerges through a political process and rule setting. This stability is nevertheless less than neutral: '[g]overnment officials, workers, and employers engage in struggles to structure these rules to their advantage' (Fligstein and Calder, 2015, p. 2). This provides external shocks to extant structures and on-going practices.

3.4.2 Interactions

The consensual of value-creating interactions can be considered an effect of the influence of classical exchange theory. The rationality assumption that defines how needs are met and resources exchanged is an effective equilibrium of supply and demand calculations. Consequently, distributive justice is not an issue, since rational calculations either enable or hinder exchange. However, exchange doesn't equal total benefit, may be less than voluntary and prone to the influence of power disparities, and lead to 'systems of voluntary and equal exchange [becoming] systems of domination and even exploitation' (Zeitz, 1980, p. 81). In value creation and service exchange, the facility and disposition to integrate resources needs to be considered coincidentally with the voluntariness and possibility to do so. The latter can respectively be affected by coercion or relate to a lack or scarcity of resources (see Gilbert, 2014; Olson, 1971; Zeitz, 1980). Conflictual interaction is intrinsic to the maxim of unequal power relations and follows from the divergent goals of actors (Zeitz, 1980).

On a societal level, extraction of value by a dominant actor can be the results of institutional changes, such as the dismantling of social structures and financialisation, that thwart long-term equal development in a society and in various localities. Some recent research (Bowman et al., 2014) points out how extraction of point value (i.e. normally, profit that is extractable here and now, without the consideration of possible temporal development in the nature and/or magnitude of value, or the social-economic-political consequences of value extraction) results in exploitation of local, foundational economies. Similarly, critical studies employing a labour process theory approach have viewed value-creating interactions as exploitation of surplus value (Cova and Dalli, 2009; Zwick et al., 2008). On the level of the collectivity, the conflictual interactions between the incumbents and challengers has implications on how the latter organise as well as their practices. Cova and Paraque (2012) point out that as a consequence of the exploitation interaction between brand-owning organisations and brand communities, the latter organised in rival organisations in a non-hierarchical and democratic form.

Relational stability, which is 'the hard fought and fragile state of affairs ... an agreement negotiated primarily by the efforts of field dominants (and their internal and external allies) to preserve a status quo that generally serves their interests' (McAdam and Scott, 2005), is shaken by conflicts that agitate action, mobilisation and the social imagination of the challengers. While settlements will eventually be reached, the ensuing status quo is only a fleeting state in a further cycle of ideological dissonance and contentious practice.

3.4.3 Practices

In SDL, practice highlights 'how economic and social exchange becomes reconciled and stabilized' (Vargo and Lusch, 2016, p. 19). To Haiven (2014, p. 65), '[o]ur daily practices reconfirm and reinforce or sometimes challenge and disrupt the values of those around

us'. Echeverri and Skålén (2011) and Laamanen and Skålén (2015) argue that collaborative value creation is a function of actors enacting practices congruently, while contentious value creation suggests actors enacting practices incongruently. Practice is contentious, when it works to withhold, withdraw or turn resources to work against field convention. In challenger collectivities, variety in contextual embedding and group composition impact the intensity of contentious practice. In their examination of collective consumer resistance, Dalli and Corciolani (2008) point out to moderate resistance in cases where communities are integrated in markets, collective actors are not (necessarily) activists, and their objectives are diverse. The authors further point out the elusiveness of a collectivity, where engagement in collective practice can be means for accomplishing personal identity projects (Dalli and Corciolani, 2008).

Agreement is required for a community to work together. Authorities work to ensure the functioning of a field, according to a set of accepted and legitimised ideas, morals and values further cementing practice repertoires of domination (Fligstein and McAdam, 2012). Yet, domination takes place in a cycle of contentious action, counteraction, and compromise, where power relationships in the field are continuously reconfigured and stability becomes an interim stage in a continuous cycle of relational friction between the incumbents and challengers. By introducing incumbents and challengers and the conflict between them as key to value creation, the collective–conflictual framework allows opportunities to define and analyse contentious value creation practices. Such a definition of practice rests firmly in the understanding of collective actors challenging (or defending) some form of meaning, power and/or authority through contentious strategies and tactics, aimed at resettling the field on a more equitable basis. The difference here to incongruent enactment of practices (Echeverri and Skålén 2011) is that beyond disagreement and mismatching in the enactment of practice, the actors *consciously and actively* draw on contentious practices in an attempt to supersede and offset each other's practice repertoires.

3.4.4 Outcomes

Typically, value creation literature considers value outcomes as experiential and subjectively determined in-use. Any conflict would relate to the perceived and experienced value, that is, the (non)fulfilment of the provider's value proposition in customer's value-in-use, as experienced by the customer. The settlement of this conflict materialises in (dis)satisfaction and (dis)loyalty. Following the consensual logic, collective value becomes an effect of social consensus, where subjective experiences of value are influenced by collective and intersubjective dimensions of the social construction of value (Edvardsson et al., 2011).

With value negotiated along various actors and influences in a system (Corvellec and Hultman, 2014; van Wijk et al., 2013), the ubiquitously positive effects of value creation to all stakeholders (e.g. Lusch and Webster, 2011) becomes contested. Although exploitation, injustice, deprivation, dissatisfaction or frustration is not always substantial enough to result in antagonistic collective action – i.e. not a mobilising grievance (cf. Snow and Soule, 2010) – neither does this afford the conclusion that value creation is always mutually beneficial. For example, the changes in the music distribution market studied by Giesler (2008) suggest no conflict resolution; rather, the relationship between incumbents and challengers can be settled for the present with conflict nevertheless enduring. Van Wijk et al. (2013) describe the establishment of sustainable tourism in the Netherlands as mutual co-optation, where in the process of field

contestation the radical nature of activists' value proposition is diluted to fit the fields' dominant perspective.

Taking the collective–conflictual value creation framework as the departure point I now move to discuss the fieldwork conducted in the Finnish labour movement and how it illustrates the dynamics and politics of value creation.

PART II – Fieldwork

The task of an analyst is not to invent a utopia, to tell people what they should want and fight for, but rather to observe people's struggles, to try to clarify them, to help a movement become self-conscious about its goals, tactics, and strategy.

(Clawson, 2003, p. 26)

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The departure point for this dissertation is the recognition expressed in the introduction relating to the still scant theorisation of contentious collective action in marketing theory: rather, ours is a discipline obsessed with the individual and phenomenological nature of value creation, consumption, et cetera. Keeping in mind the research questions, I ventured to find out how the deficit in previous research could be remedied. Social practices of collective value creation necessitate an understanding of the socio-cultural settings – *fields* – wherein these are enacted. Williams and May (1996) establish that ‘...only by knowing the meanings that agents attach to their actions can we hope to explain them’ (Williams and May, 1996, p. 60). Such knowledge can best be generated in situ; therefore, a qualitative research approach employing critical ethnography was selected.

Research in the critical theory tradition explores subjective life worlds with a critical, ethical stance with various textual materials as well as studying ongoing events. Critical studies engage individuals and groups in their context, accounting for sociocultural structures, processes and ideologies, building critiques and awareness through juxtaposition and developing critically grounded action (Prasad 2005; see also Murray and Ozanne, 1991). I examined trade unionism as an information-rich, membership-based organisation, engaged in collective action, as it is practiced in the everyday. Trade unions represent a valid and valuable empirical context, exhibiting an organisational need for understanding the politics of value creation in mutuality-based relational contexts in dynamic societal environments of the neoliberal labour markets. The approach taken resulted in a multi-year ethnography of trade union organisations and their activities in Finland. Using critical ethnography enabled an examination of organisational culture and power in relation to union organising and examining strategic action within the institutional field of industrial relations.

The outlook is on the interplay of the macro, meso and micro level practices: it is paramount to perceive the reciprocal nature of relationships between individuals, organisations and institutions over the opportunity-constraint continuum of agency (Battilana, 2006; Snow and Soule, 2010). A combination of various materials allows for a holistic view to organisational work in the labour movement at the intersection of labour market institutions (Crouch, 1982), competing ideologies (cf. Dholakia, 2012; Firat, 2013) and the collectivity’s contentious value creation practices (Laamanen and Skålén, 2015). The theoretical grounding departs from previous studies in marketing theories of value creation. Taking an abductive approach, which by nature is recursively moving between theory and empirics, leads to a different approach in constructing a theoretical backbone, with some degree of theoretical eclecticism. Van Maanen (2011a) posits: ‘one need not stake out a theoretical claim on how the world is before beginning a research project’ (Van Maanen, 2011a, p. 222); rather, we should allow ‘...our questions to determine our theories’. On the connection between theory and ethnography, Van Maanen maintains (2011a, p. 222-223) that:

This [pragmatic] view of theory resonates well with the ethnographic research process both in the field and at the writing desk. It may lead at times to a rather shameless eclecticism as various theories are drawn on to explain and perhaps generalize certain matters as the specific nuts and bolts of various theorists are selectively put to use ... The point here is that a good deal of the headwork involved in ethnography is in developing concepts, theories, or frameworks that fit one’s particular research questions and studied situations ... In practice, theory choices (the rabbits we pull out of our hats) rest as much on taste as on fit. And taste in ethnography, as elsewhere, results from what is no doubt a complex interaction involving ethnographers, their mentors, their readings, their disciplinary orientations, their colleagues, their students, their subjects, their

friends, their critics, and their readers (increasingly their subjects too). The process is altogether de-centred and beyond the grasp of any one interested group to fully monitor or control.

As such, the research becomes a non-linear and non-canonical process, whereby theory and practice are intertwined on various levels and various phases. The fieldwork was performed in the Finnish labour movement, which is an amalgamated and bounded system consisting of 3 trade union confederations with a total of 73 affiliate member organisations. The Finnish labour movement represents the spatiotemporal boundaries of the inquiry. Since the contextual theory in the theoretical framework engages in a meta-discussion on social movements (and not the labour movement and trade unionism as such), further theoretical and empirical studies are integrated into the discussion of the ethnography below (cf. Alvesson and Sandberg, 2014).

4.1 Research philosophical assumptions in critical ethnography

The empirical approach to value creation taken in this study is critical ethnography. Critical ethnography is a cultural Marxist methodology and connects with theories of fields and social structuration; critical ethnography attempts to expose structures and articulations of power in social contexts (Foley, 2002; Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008; Moisander and Valtonen, 2006). Following Marsh and Furlong (2002), I begin with the researcher's skin and consider the ontological and epistemological assumptions in this research. Then, I will recount the nitty-gritty of the research process before moving on to the empirical material.

Ontology is a way of describing the reality around us whereas epistemology refers to our claims on knowledge. Ontological assumptions are based on the nature of reality, and whether it exists within or without individual consciousness (e.g. Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Marsh and Furlong (2002) differentiate between a foundationalist (objective) and social constructionist (subjective) ontologies, where the former accepts essential, real differences in being whereas the latter considers them socially constructed and as such anti-essential. Differences of power, status, class et cetera in society can be seen from either perspective. I assign to the latter. The gist of social constructionism's ontology is that 'X socially constructs Y' (Mallon, 2013). This idea is rather vague and tautological, unless contrasted with the objectivist ontology, which rests on the notion that reality exists irrespective of human interpretation (e.g. Johnson and Duberley, 2000). Social constructivism's subjectivism relates to how reality is experienced by the subject and is not an objective, observable fact of nature. On an epistemological level, social constructionist ontology impacts the knowledge claims made. In contrast to the scientific objectivism, which considers objective, value-free representation of reality as a possibility, social constructionist subjective epistemology considers scientific representations as conventional (Kratochwil, 2008). For Marsh and Furlong (2002) knowledge creation rests on double hermeneutics where 'the world is interpreted by actors (one hermeneutic level) and their interpretation is interpreted by the observer (second hermeneutic level)' (Marsh and Furlong, 2002, p.19); thus, social constructivist knowledge creation is an empirical effort, stressing the meanings social actors give to their experience (Weinberg, 2009).

The research project takes a critical (theory) perspective to collective action in value-creating fields. Critical theory emerged out of cultural critiques on the '...dysfunctional consequences of modernity and the loss of meaning in the contemporary industrial society' (Prasad, 2005, p. 137). Albeit based on Marxist thought, critical theorists are mainly concerned with cultural processes of ideology, rather than examining the structural (base-superstructure) relations of domination in societies. Ideology in the

critical theory context refers to ‘...all systematically distorted accounts of reality that both conceal and legitimate social asymmetries and injustices’ (Prasad, 2005, p. 139). Studies in the critical tradition focus on the cultural practices of domination, power and ideology midway on the subjective and objective trajectory towards emancipatory ends (see figure 8 below; Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Murray and Ozanne, 1991; Murray et al., 1994; Skrutkowski, 2014). In their classical treatise of research paradigms, Burrell and Morgan (1979) assign critical theory and conflict theory aligned with a perspective toward radical social change (both in radical humanist and radical structuralist paradigms). These approaches commonly share a critique of the (ideological) status quo – emphasising revelation, radical change, domination, deprivation and emancipation – while differing in the structural determinism of conflict and domination. This paradigmatic separation of humanistic and structuralist approaches can be bridged by considering agency and structure as duality in the Giddensian sense (1984) mutually constructive through practice (Prasad, 2005).

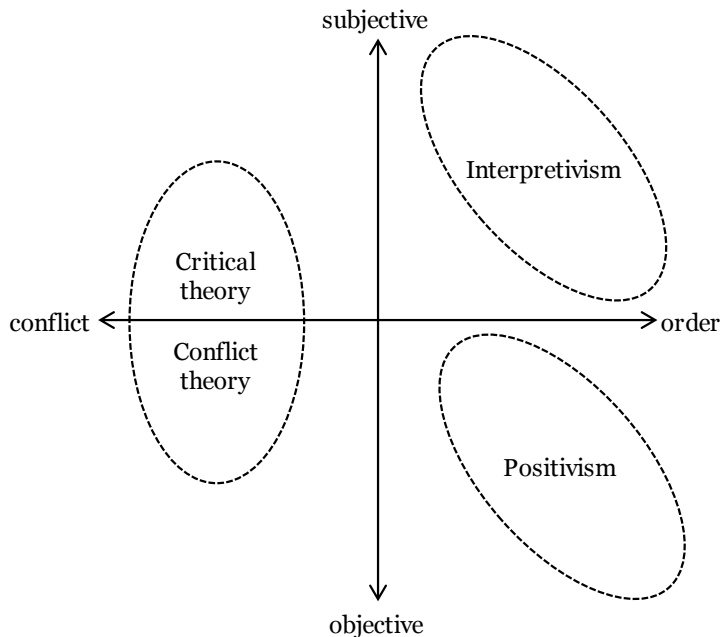


Figure 8 Knowledge paradigms (adapted from Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Murray and Ozanne, 1991)

Ontological mapping of a critical approach can be complicated, since while critical studies accept the ontological premise of social construction, they reject some of the extreme forms of relativism¹³ connected to, for instance, postmodern forms of social

¹³ If it is accepted that experience of the world is subjective, free from material constraints (e.g. Murray and Ozanne, 1991), distrusting any truth claims whatsoever and resulting in relative epistemology (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008; Johnson and Duberley, 2000), it would be hard to sustain the theoretical criticism, should my ontological and epistemological understanding be founded in a relativist perspective: ‘under the mantle of relativism it is difficult to see how anyone can have anything to say which is significant, never mind critical’ (Johnson and Duberley, 2000, p.112).

constructionist epistemology (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008; Johnson and Duberley, 2000). Critical research indeed requires scepticism about the innocence of social and institutional practices regardless of their apparent mundane or commonplace nature. Critical research is inherently political: ‘... the issue [for the researcher] becomes not whether one can be apolitical in research, but rather what political stance one takes’ (Murray and Ozanne, 1991, p. 130). Looking at fields of value creation and the structuration of social reality (cf. Bourdieu, 2005; Fligstein and McAdam, 2011, 2012; Giddens, 1984) emerging through collective practice introduces a particular epistemology knowledge claims associated with a social constructionist ontology (Gherardi and Perotta, 2012).

Critical ethnography aligns with the general ontological and epistemological assumption of social construction – the social world is co-created, context bound and relational. However, social construction in critical research is not relativist, but an elaborated version of the context-dependent idea of ontology (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008; Johnson and Duberley, 2000) – that reality is an interactive human product. For critical ethnography and the ethnographer, social reality of groups is intersubjective (i.e. practically constructed and reconstructed). Epistemologically, this means theorising based on the participants’ understanding in the (historical) context of emergence for emancipation.

As with any ethnographic research, the researcher needs to be sensitive to the socially constructed reality and the limits of understanding thereof, as well as reflexive of the provisionality of representation the researcher can gain through direct field experience (Foley, 2002). To this final point of reflexivity, Foley (2002) presents several approaches. The Bourdieusian theoretical reflexivity connects well with the work at hand, whereby the

“epistemologically reflexive” sociologist grounds her theoretical constructs in the everyday cultural practice of the subjects. Such a move replaces the abstract armchair theorizing about everyday life with an experiential, abductive (deductive and inductive) way of knowing. An abductive ethnographer must tack back and forth mentally between her concrete field experience and her abstract theoretical explanation of that experience. (Foley, 2002, p. 476)

Departing from general ethnographic maxims, ethnographies of the critical variety connect the fieldwork account to social relations, that is, social structures and power relations (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). In the Bourdieusian practice theory, (collective) agency is central and often beyond the consciousness of the individuals or groups (Foley, 2002). Similarly, institutional theory considers the naturalisation of institutions beyond the understanding of the actors that were not instrumental in constructing these institutions (see e.g. Battilana, 2006; North, 1991).

4.2 Data collection

The collection of empirical material in an ethnographic study is generally loosely structured and flexible, as illustrated by an emergent research design (rather than being strictly constructed from the offset; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). This allows for alteration, as the research progresses from an initially broad to a more concise perspective.

Table 5 Field work phases and empirical material

1st phase, May-December 2011		<i>Occurrence</i>
<i>Focus</i>	<i>Method</i>	
Labour movement leadership	Semi-structured interviews	10
2nd phase, August 2012-February 2013		<i>Occurrence</i>
<i>Focus</i>	<i>Method</i>	
Trade union leadership and administration work	Participation in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • representative assembly meetings • board meetings • strategy working group meetings • other working group meetings 	1 3 5 2
	Observing union administrative staff at work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • workplace meetings, union collaboration meetings, work processes 	3
Local actives and representatives	Observing the chief shop steward(s) at work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • national meetings • local meetings 	1 5
Membership	Observing the chief shop steward(s) at work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • membership meetings, training days, workshops 	8
Ancillary material		
Other material such as surveys, questionnaires, meeting protocols and photographs		

In this study, the ethnographic approach corresponds with the newness of the approach: the argument in this thesis challenges the assumptions of individuality and accords with theorisations of value creation in marketing. In studying value creation from a collective–conflictual perspective, ethnographic methods are especially beneficial, as the analysis of practices is inherently based on activities and their context (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Given the ethnographic approach, the observations are the primary vehicles towards generating understanding and represent the largest number of fieldwork hours and visits. The interviews in the empirical material are both individual open-ended interviews as well as group discussion. A combination of various materials allows for a holistic view of organisational work in the labour movement at the intersection of labour market institutions and competing ideologies (cf. Dholakia, 2012).

The fieldwork was conducted in two major phases (see table 5). In the initial first phase of research during 2011, semi-structured interviews-cum-discussions were conducted with leaders across the labour movement. In the second phase, managerial and collective practices were mapped through participant observation in situ, where strategising, organising and ‘living’ of membership happens – at various leadership and administrative meetings, during local affairs, and member events. The second fieldwork phase was conducted from August 2012 to February 2013. All assorted secondary data were categorised under ‘ancillary material’. During the fieldwork, I was granted access to restricted material¹⁴ that was e.g. handled in the various meetings. Some raw data consisting of, amongst others, of open question answers from membership surveys were received for analysis. Documentary and archival data, as well as openly accessible survey data, are also abundantly available for any researcher

4.2.1 Interviews

The qualitative interview was utilised as the specific data collection method. The interview material was gathered across the Finnish labour movement, including trade union federations and trade unions. The sample includes blue- and white-collar unions as well as those for professionals and managers (federations 1–3, not in that order). Open-ended guided conversations (Lofland et al., 2006) were conducted with 10 directors in charge of member relations or in a general leadership positions (executive directors; see table 6) and structured around themes of membership and meaning construction (see appendix 1). The informants were selected by snowball sampling, which is a particular non-probability based sampling method, useful in situations where few informants are known to possess certain characteristics or knowledge (Patton, 2002). For the purposes of these interviews, the informants should possess a particularly broad perspective into organising, as well as sufficient experience in the labour movement, to give resonance to their insights. The former characteristic relates to the informants’ current paid position, whereas the latter can be expressed in years of active participation in unions (ranging from local participation, local/national representation, and positions).

A potential pitfall of following the snowball sampling strategy is that the sample of informants becomes skewed towards certain common denominators. Looking at the sample characteristics in table 6, skewedness could be perceived as an issue here too, as clear majority of the organisations were affiliated with the same union federation.

¹⁴ All collected primary empirical material as well as any document received for use, was treated with confidentiality and anonymised.

However, given the variety in the industries whose workers these unions represent¹⁵, this overrepresentation can be considered unproblematic. In order to prevent a homogenous sample, informants from different levels, i.e. representing trade unions and union federations, are included. Ultimately, snowball sampling eased the access to knowledgeable individuals at a low ‘cost’.

In total, I contacted 18 potential informants using email, where I provided a short description of my research project and approach (see appendix 2). In case a potential informant did not answer, I sent one reminder, after which I did not pursue a non-responding contact further. The informants were asked to reflect on various ways in which the labour movement organisations in general and their organisations in particular view individual involvement and trade union memberships. The informants were also prompted to reflect on the social, cultural and political aspects of trade union membership and its meaning to the individual. Finally, they were to consider the various ways in which members and their organisations interact, and how organisations impact the individual members and groups of members both in positive and negative terms (for instance, by endorsing memberships and encouraging interaction as well as hindering these through organisational structures). As such, the interviews were constructed to collect in-depth material from the informant’s perspective, while keeping in mind the likelihood of self-promotion, organisational promotion and political purposes of their answers (Alvesson, 2003).

Table 6 Interview details

	Position, organisation, affiliation ¹	Experience ²	Interview duration
I1	Executive director, TU, F3	20 years	1 h 45 min
I2	Executive director, TU, F3	11 years	1 h 31 min
I3	Director, UF, F3	35 years	1 h 34 min
I4	Director, TU, F3	25 years	1 h 39 min
I5	Director, TU, F3	35 years	1 h 32 min
I6	Director, UF, F1	<i>n.a.</i>	1 h 10 min
I7	Executive director, TU, F1	16 years	2 h 25 min
I8	Executive director, TU, F3	22 years	1 h 38 min
I9	Executive director, TU, F3	16 years	1 h 40 min
I10	Director, UF, F2	13 years	1 h 52 min

¹ Trade Union/Union Federation, Federation affiliation (1, 2, or 3) ² Active in unions, 2011

The interviews were performed in three cycles during May, October and December 2011. The discussions involved the informant and the researcher at a venue selected by the former. The interviews lasted between 60 to 180 minutes, with an average duration of 90 minutes, resulting in altogether 16 hours and 16 minutes of recorded discussion.

¹⁵ Two of the unions in the sample represent workers in the same industry, yet in different companies; thus, there is a *theoretical* overlap between representation.

Recordings were made using a digital voice recorder with the explicit consent of the informant. During the three initial interviews, an interview guide (see appendix 1) was used as a tool to remind the researcher on specific topics that needed to be covered. This tool was later abandoned, and the subsequent interviews were increasingly naturally occurring by nature and less technical, that is, explicitly and slavishly following a scheme of topics.

The interviews were conducted in Finnish and were later transcribed in Finnish with sufficient precision and translated into English. Central to the concerns of the empirical data collection through the discussions were the meanings presented and portrayed therein, not any attempt to mirror reality based on linguistic technicalities (cf. Alvesson and Sandberg, 2014; Silverman, 2006). Furthermore, qualitative interview material has its limits, as it may not portray facts, events or direct experience, but rather their representations (Silverman, 2006) directed by the social interaction between the engaged parties and cultural conventions (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006). This further underlines the need to examine practice in and around unions. In the second phase of the research, union practices were approached through participant observation. This method is discussed in further detail below.

4.2.2 Participant observation

Ethnography was the main method of collecting data in the second phase of the study conducted in a trade union organisation. The case trade union is a mid-sized, nationwide operating union representing service industry employees. The predominantly female membership is employed in a variety of white-collar and professional positions. The union can be represented as in the following figure 9¹⁶. While this is a particularly typical structure, it is also rather agile, as it omits particular local branches. Further, the structure is central to understanding the various levels of value creation taking place in the union.

The specific interest and approach in this ethnography was to study ongoing union work across organisational levels, including strategy and administrative work, as well as interaction with members, who are the *raison d'être* for a trade union and give legitimisation to its actions and claims. Emergence of this particular organisation provides a perfect opportunity to examine the formulation of the union in strategy and in practice terms (cf. Maeckelbergh, 2009; Schatzki, 2006). The approach is an intensive case, which is specific and unique (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008): it had formerly gained independence in a union merger, whereby the new situation induced a political and representational flux to be addressed. There had been no unanimous drive for independent representation, beyond successful secession that required mobilising local resources and skills after the fact as well. Restructuring required strategy work as well as work-as-usual, both of which took place during the data collection period between August 2012 and February 2013. During these seven months of data collection, I participated in a wide variety of union activities that amounted to 27 particular observation occasions. These include meetings of central union bodies, such as representative assembly and board meetings, meetings of the strategy working group and observations of union administration work. Union shop stewards' work was observed during national and local meetings. Finally, activities oriented towards rank-and-file member form a substantial part of the data set with 8 observation situations. These

¹⁶ The lines illustrate how the membership elects the representative assembly and the board, the union president as well as the shop stewards. The dashed lines illustrate supervisory/authority relationships.

interactions took place in organised settings, such as workplace and regional membership meetings.

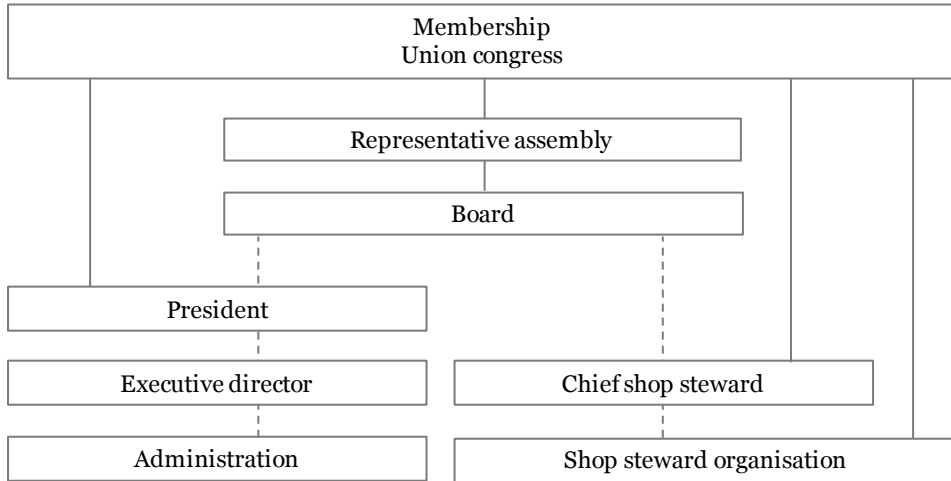


Figure 9 Organisational structure

The observed situations varied in length and topic. The duration of the various observed events lasted from few hour long ad hoc meetings, half-day meetings to full day seminar and events lasting up to three days, with the length of the working day sometimes reaching 20 hours. The activities I examined were typical union activities; however, as Balsiger and Lambelet (2014) point out in stating that ethnography in social movement organising is not a 24/7 affair, so too were the observation situations temporally and spatially dispersed. The most regular situations were union administration meetings. For instance, strategy group and board meetings took place once each month. This was different for the membership-oriented activities. These were more likely to take place once a year and in the local contexts. To be able to access these situations required extensive knowledge of local organising. Moreover, the sampling of the events was nationwide. The attended events were selected in collaboration with the union administrative staff and the chief shop steward. The administrators and chief shop stewards are the contact partners of the local organisers and invited to the events. The administrators also often manage the organisational aspects of setting the events. Sampling of these events was discussed at length to ensure a sufficient number, as well as the appropriate national coverage, of the union's activities.

While most of the observed leadership and administrative meetings observed took place in Helsinki, I travelled to various regional offices together with the chief shop stewards for local representatives' meetings or conference resorts, where the membership meetings took place. The data collection was entirely overt and during each occasion, I would present myself and the work I am conducting to the participants. Since access to these occasions was negotiated with the unions as part of the research project, additional consent was not asked. The only exception to the above were situations where audio recording or photography were used, for example, in group discussions or workshops, where consent was verbally asked from the participants (see further discussion on research ethics in chapter 8.3).

During the research project, several documents (such as agendas, meeting minutes, emails, working documents) we collected. These documents were coded and archived to provide additional depth to the field notes. The dataset also included photography, while a visual analysis of union activities was out of the scope of this study.

4.2.3 Reflection on ‘doing’ abduction

The lensing created through critical ethnography is an abductive process ‘...that conjoins theory and empirical field work eventually produces constructs or heuristic devices used for mapping and representing (“objectivating”) the taken-for-granted cultural and political practices observed’ (Foley 2002, p. 477). Abduction then stands for a research process that ‘...moving from the everyday descriptions and meanings given by people, to categories and concepts that create the basis of an understanding or an explanation to the phenomenon described’ (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 23); a process that moves between observations and theories to theorising the phenomenon (Locke 2010) in ‘systemic combining’ of first matching theory and reality, and secondly, involving direction and redirection (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). Figure 10 depicts the abductive research process. It is adapted from Kovács and Spens’ (2005, p. 139) framework and describes the process of matching, that is, moving between theory and reality/observation. In addition to the original process description by Kovács and Spens (2005), I add practice matching (phase 5) to illustrate how the suggested theory (phase 4) is in dialogue with the empirical observation and theory matching (phases 1–3).

Beyond illustrating phases of research, figure 10 also allows reflection towards the ethnographic approach (reflexivity holds a central position in ethnographic work; Foley, 2002). While I’m not providing a full confessionary (Van Maanen, 2011b), I want to elaborate on the abductive research process to make it more accessible and transparent, and thus, open to evaluation of plausibility and validity. No research project comes of nothing and so too did my personal interest drive how this study unfolded. In 2011 when I started my doctoral dissertation research, I was working on a radically different topic, which approached value creation in retail banking from a consumer’s perspective. I had come in to the doctoral programme and was planning to continue on my Master’s dissertation on customer loyalty and value in the banking industry. For the first couple of months, I worked on an industry-oriented research project for my first supervisor collecting qualitative data on retail banking customers, their experiences and expectations, while at the same time, fleshing out my own approach. Nevertheless, around May 2011 I had a realisation that I needed to work on something that connected more to my personal interests, and frankly, politics.

Before my doctoral studies, I had been an active member of and worked as a shop steward in a union. I had experience of the highs and lows of unionism: the collaboration amongst the members, the rush of standing up to the management and also the frustration of dealing with formal organisations and peoples’ expectations. Doing research on the labour movement, I knew it would be no picnic, because the contexts in which trade unions are embedded in are inherently conflictual. Thus, there were two particular types of preunderstanding at work in my research: theoretical socialisation into the discussions in value creation in marketing, and a background as a union activist and shop steward. Having been personally involved in the labour movement both in local representation as well as national activities, I am cultured in union logics and language. While this positively impacts rapport, the consequences of familiarity need to be considered when contemplating research quality (see chapter 8.3).

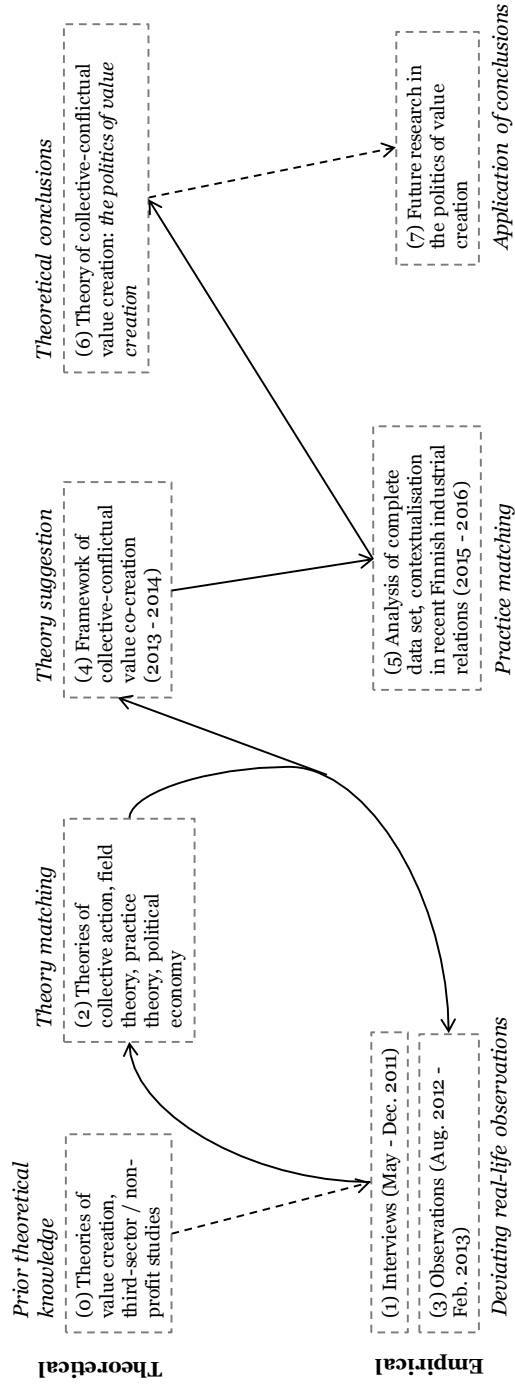


Figure 10 The abductive research process

When I initially expressed interest in studying the labour movement as a field of value creation, my supervisor shared his experience of commencing fieldwork with a nascent perspective. In practice, fieldwork thus commenced with a particular interest on value creation in a unionised setting. Initially, I sought support for my approach in third-sector and non-profit research literature. This literature has a natural connection to marketing through the interdisciplinary literature on non-profit and social marketing. The interview material collected in the first fieldwork phase illustrated how understandings and meanings around union activities diverged between the actors. Further, power and position as influential mechanisms to activities also came up during this phase. This implied a difference to the overall discourse maintained in the value creation literature and became the impetus to further investigate this mismatch between theory and real-life context.

While literature in marketing and non-profits de-emphasised power and conflict, these are central to SMS. Deep engagement with studies on labour movement organising increased the theoretical refinement. This was when I started further engaging with sociological literature on collective action and social movements further. Further reading lead me to economic sociology and the theory of fields in particular, which became a central framework for understanding the activities I was studying. In the following chapter 4.3, I describe the analytic process (phases 4 and 5) behind testing the collective–conflictual value creation framework, through which I arrive at the theoretical conclusion (phase 6, illustrated in chapter 7). The application of the conclusions (phase 7) is beyond this dissertation and consequently illustrated at the end of the dissertation in future research avenues.

4.3 Data analysis and presentation

Using the framework presented in table 4, in the following pages I discuss the components of collective–conflictual value creation in the contextual setting of the Finnish labour movement. I focus on the collective–conflictual value creation framework (see below table 7) to examine the labour movement and unions as the central actors in my study. In this part II of the dissertation, I describe and contextualise the phenomenon of trade unionism. In the previous chapters, apart from the introduction, the labour movement and trade unionism as the setting of the study have not garnered very much attention, and therefore, it is imperative to give an overview of the what, why, and how of organised labour. Indeed, Dey (1993) considers contextualising an important element in situating action in its socio-historical, organisational, temporal, spatial and network setting. Context is the ‘...key to meaning, since meaning can be conveyed “correctly” only if context is also understood’ (Dey, 1993, p. 32). This is followed by describing what ‘actually’ happened during fieldwork, as seen through the analysis of various practices. Contextualisation further converges with the evaluative criteria of critical theory (see appendix 3).

Given the various contextual factors discussed in further detail in chapter 5, trade unions can be, and here are, analysed as field challengers. The collected data illustrates trade union interactions with the field and the environment on both the institutional macro and organisational meso levels. The strategic action practices are considered in three general categories of servicing, organising and framing. These practices are established in social movements and labour movement research to illustrate the creation of the logic, meaning and model of union action. Finally, the outcomes are illustrated.

Following Laamanen and Skålén's (2015) argument of challengers as the missing categorisation in value creation theory, I am concentrating on the labour movement and its actors engaging in collective action in challenging the societal and organisational structures for work as form of value creation. With regards to interactions, my argument here departs from looking at confrontation of capital at the workplace, the conventional site of analysing worker-union-management relations (e.g. Beynon, 1973; Burawoy, 1979; Fantasia, 1988; Lopez, 2004), I am concentrating on how contention takes place in and around the institutional and organisational plains of unionism. This translates to ways of envisioning the role of the labour movement in the society (macro-level) and practicing collective action in trade union organisations (meso- and micro-levels).

Table 7 Focusing the collective–conflictual value creation framework

Components	Empirical focus	Rationale
<i>Actors</i>	Labour movement and unions as field challengers	Challengers have particular interest in affecting social order and power relations
	Key practitioners in the labour movement leadership and union leadership, administration and shop steward network	Key practitioners represent the challenger groups
<i>Interactions</i>	Societal interaction in labour market participation and labour movement position in the relational network	Elaborates on the configuration of field dynamics in the societal (1) and organisational (2) context and how structures and understandings maintain and disrupt the field order
	Organisational structures and interaction between local shop stewards, rank-and-file activists, and general membership	
<i>Practices</i>	Strategic collective action practice repertoires: servicing, organising, and framing	Illustrates the agentic mechanisms of collaboration and contention in field and organisational contexts, including the mobilisation of social, cultural and political resources, participation and community support
<i>Outcomes</i>	Field and local consequences of action	Establishes how conflicts are settled, activities and participation maintained and contentious pressures evaded

Interactions on the institutional macro-level relate to how labour movement organisations – union confederations and individual trade unions – relate to other actors in the institutional field of industrial relations, state and the public opinion. Thus, this field includes employers' organisations and governmental bodies, but also other organisations such as interest groups representing, amongst others, taxpayers, consumers, environments, and pension drawers. Assigning the labour movement, a challenger position is justifiable, given the underlying ideology of neoliberalism shared by employers' organisations and the government. Furthermore, on the macro-level,

theories of social movements and collective action tell us (Snow and Soule, 2010) that any movement is internally deemed to navigate and align the multiple interests of its participants and constituencies. In this respect, the Finnish labour movement is in no way different, and particular camps with intrinsic interests are present. This induces variation around the labour movement resulting in contentious understandings around how the interests of workers are best represented.

The latter meso- and micro-levels translates to the organisational practice domain, where ways of understanding need to be connected with ways and resources of doing: the integration of materials, competence and meaning (Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki 2001; Shove et al., 2012). Administrative and local organising in this study stand for different practice domains: these correlate to the common structures of trade unions in administrative central and operative local bodies. Where these two share a common goal to improve the position of the workers *vis-à-vis* the employer(s), they can and do disagree on the means. Therefore, while unions are seen here as field challengers, it is hardly possible to perceive them as uniform, harmonious communities in their collective practice¹⁷.

The “epistemologically reflexive” sociologist grounds her theoretical constructs in the everyday cultural *practice* of the subjects’ (Foley, 2002, p. 476, emphasis added); following the abductive research process, the analysis of practice is bracketed to allow the data to inform and construct subsequent theorisation, not the opposite. Bracketing (or problematising researcher’s assumptions) allows a broader approach to fieldwork and understanding of empirical material (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2014). Following Crouch (1982), union practices can be analysed beyond collaboration, contention and conflict in the labour market (the macro-level). Due to this, practices are examined in the everyday union activities.

Finally, due to the complexities and various tensions in the labour movement and particular trade unions, value as an outcome of interactions and practices is evaluated through the collective–conflictual framework. Here, the internal–external/intended–unintended division highlights the multiplicity of value creation outcomes hitherto underdeveloped in the marketing discourses around value creation. As the context of this empirical study is unconventional in contemporary marketing theory, in the following I first present an overview of the labour movement, unionisation and union organising to highlight the societal function of this activity. This extends and conceptualises the theoretical framework and runs parallel to analysis. The presentation of the empirical findings of the ethnographic study moves from the macro setting of the Finnish labour relations through organisational strategising to examining the local practices of organising respectively.

¹⁷ A similar argument is made in social movement theory on the constitution of social movements by various social movement organisations, and how their interrelationships impact collective action and movement democracy.

5 UNDERSTANDING ORGANISED LABOUR

In this dissertation, I use trade unionism as an illustrative case for the politics of value creation. While organised labour is by no means the only or the most unambiguous case of collective and conflictual value creation, it connects to the initial framing of Laamanen and Skålén (2015), in which the nature of the challenger as a social movement is central. As I will show later, the labour movement and trade unions represent a collective context that is by nature is both collaborative and conflictual in terms of relationships, interactions, practices and outcomes. For this, it is important to understand the logic of trade unionism, the historical roots of organised labour as a collective action context, and the various logics, organisations and institutions the labour market incorporates. Therefore, I first need to contextualise my approach in the relational and institutional realities of organised labour. The following chapter presents the theoretical contextualisation in labour movement literature, whereas chapter 6 contextualises the discussion in the empirical study.

In the preceding chapters, I have elaborated the interdisciplinary roots, conceptualisation and the methodological approach of my study on the phenomenon of collective value and especially its less than unitary and harmonious nature. Establishing a framework that elaborates on the communalities between value creation theory and theories of collective action expands on the former's conflict avoidance as well as extends the latter view of challenges to authority. Collective action with both structural and agentic dimensions seemed '[f]or some time ... permanently wedded, under the rubric of a historic event par excellence, the labour movement' (Dubet and Lustiger-Thaler, 2004, p. 557). Mobilising labour is a teleological activity in its pursuit to adjust the labour market, especially labour conditions and practices, and employment policies, to function in a manner beneficial to the employee. Nevertheless, as the conditions and contexts of employment are in flux, labour movement participants, while still having explicit goals, will continue to experience mutable environments and increasing hostility. Much of this hostility has its origin in the clash of organised labour with the dominant socio-political model and logic, namely, neoliberalism. Neoliberalism provides a general worldview against which labour market conflict is framed.

Neoliberalism is an inventive, constructivist, modernizing force, which aims to produce a new social and political model ... Neoliberal policy targets institutions and activities which lie outside of the market, such as universities, households, public administrations and trade unions. This may be so as to bring them inside the market, through acts of privatization; or to reinvent them in a 'market-like' way; or simply to neutralize or disband them ... The state must be an active force, and cannot simply rely on 'market forces'. This is where the distinction from Victorian liberalism is greatest. Neoliberal states are required to produce and reproduce the rules of institutions and individual conduct, in ways that accord with a certain ethical and political vision ... This ethical and political vision is dominated by an idea of competitive activity, that is, the production of inequality. Competition and inequality are valued positively under neoliberalism, as a non-socialist principle for society in general, through which value and scientific knowledge can best be pursued (Davies, 2014, p. 310)

In the classical neoliberal thought, markets and competition are the foundation of why individuals collaborate. Neither is seen as a threat to social solidarity; this is in stark contrast to the perception dominant in the classical sociological literature (Gane, 2014). By the end of the 1970s neoliberalism emerged as a genuine politico-economic regime that became an orthodoxy with 'there is no alternative (TINA)' principle in the 1980s and 1990s (Gamble, 2007). Indeed, '...all forms of social solidarity were to be dissolved in favour of individualism, private property, personal responsibility and family values'

(Harvey, 2005, p. 23)¹⁸ and collectivism and the ‘common good’ was replaced by exaltation of the individual and competition (Amable, 2011). This eventually leads to life in general existing under the conditions of the market, competitiveness and profit production. In describing neoliberal agency, Gershon (2011) differentiates between the liberal notion of individual as property, whereby people and bodies (and any capacity therein) can enter a labour contract on the market, and the neoliberal notion of individual as business, as a collection of skills, traits and assets that need be developed and managed. Various actors, such as higher education institutions (see Varman et al., 2011), play a central role in the creation of such neoliberal market subjectivity. In many ways, marketing has become the institutionalised model of neoliberalisation in society, whereby any relationship can be compared to market(ing) relations: ‘...that all relations among human beings, even including relations among family members, model the marketing sensibility; where one’s identity and existence need to be “marketed,” so as to achieve a high “market value” in others’ estimation’ (Firat, 2013, p. 80)

One of the key areas of implementation for neoliberal theory has been the labour market. Amable (2011) establishes that ideologically neoliberalism aims to ‘delegitimize collective action when it is liable to lead to redistribution or protection from competition. These pressures take the form of a moral duty to commodify labour power and respect the market competition outcomes as just’ (Amable, 2011, p. 4-5). Given this antagonism to labour regulation and regulatory agents, it is no wonder that there is an unambiguous hostility towards trade unionism (Crouch, 2011): collective bargaining and unionisation were the first targets of both the Thatcher and Reagan administrations (Harvey, 2005). Neoliberalism effectively marginalises unions as legitimate actors in a society and further castigates union membership as an appropriate activity for the working individual (Boxall and Haynes, 1997; Dundon et al., 2010; Upchurch and Mathers, 2012; Webb, 2006).

Union strategies are based on building power through memberships and other resources by mobilising ethical and political narratives and solidarities. Ultimately, strategising includes the question of union renewal and the activities required therein. In the following pages, I present an introduction to the workings of the labour movement, trade unionism and industrial relations (see figure 11), none of which as such are stranger to discussions of value creation. For Marx (2013), all productive, that is, value creating activity is enabled through labour: profit or surplus value through the exploitation of this labour and collective resistance to exploitation through organised labour¹⁹. Beyond the focal activities and relations of production, organised labour is located at the intersection of the civil society, economic practices and relational systems of the labour market and the state (Crouch, 2011; Fantasia and Voss, 2007; Poole, 1981; Salamon, 2000).

¹⁸ Considering Harvey’s definition, family values may represent a standing of the neoconservative wing, whereas some more libertarian strands of neoliberalism would remove all regulation from all parts of life in the name of personal freedom (Gamble, 2007).

¹⁹ Marxist approaches to value nevertheless remain few in value creation literature and in many of the central articles, Marx does not receive mention even in a footnote (cf. Brown, 2007).

5.1 Labour movement, trade unionism and industrial relations

The labour movement (LM) is the quintessential modern social movement, a multidimensional and dynamic system of various institutionalised and informal groups of actors. As such, it

may comprise both legally recognized and formally sanctioned institutions (like trade unions, political parties, and works councils) as well as less formal groupings of workers and their allies (industrial actions, organizations of strike supporters, dissident movements within unions, cultural forms, etc.) (Fantasia and Voss, 2007, p. 2518)

The labour movement can be also divided into a political and an industrial branch that directs its attention and activities ‘toward the corporatist state with the aim of economic redistribution and the extension of citizenship rights, as organized in bureaucratic trade unions and parties which defend members’ interests’ (Nash, 2010, p. 88). While these two branches still often coexist and are intertwined in social democratic political institutions, in the following pages, I will look only at organised labour, that is, mobilisation and organisation of workers in the workplace and in the society through trade unionism.

Labour movement participants engage in collective action, aiming to improve the conditions of labour. Within the labour movement, workers across ranks mainly organise in trade unions that are agents at the workplace, industrial relations, and society at large. Early unionisation took the form of craft unionism, where skilled workers and artisans came together to protect their trade and income. The organisation of unskilled and semi-skilled workers formed industrial unions. This transition was drastic

from skilled craftsmen and artisans, with good pay, considerable control over the work process and involvement in the entire production process, to unskilled or semi-skilled machine operatives and labourers doing one small, repetitive task under the tight control of management and speeded up by the relentless pace of the machinery (Kaufman, 2004, p. 48)

With these conditions, it is rather unsurprising that industrial unions were strongly connected with socialism (e.g. Giddens, 1984; Poole, 1981). From this political position, the labour movement participants oppose harmful and exploitative work life practices, protect the (unionised) work force²⁰ and counterbalance the power of profits and efficiency demands inherent in the dominance of the neoliberal politics. This perspective encapsulates the labour process theory, which assumes the labour/capital relationship is essentially exploitative. The accumulation of surplus value from the labour process requires continuous innovation, regulation and control of work processes. The structural setup and processes of management lead to structured antagonism, where conflict is ever present and compliance/consent to forms of production are continuously negotiated and resisted (Burawoy, 1979; Salamon, 2000). Indeed, the labour movement cannot be entirely understood without considering it in the ‘mutually constituting relationship’ with capital, which in turn influences the role and involvement of the state (Fantasia and Voss, 2007, p. 2519).

The relations that trade unions have can be understood as co-operative, but also exhibiting coercion and compliance. For instance, in the United States, the early progressive and often militant leftist unionism lead to countermobilisation by the employers. The coercive reaction from the employers was ferocious. The state did not intervene, even when there were severe outbreaks of violence (Fantasia and Voss, 2007;

²⁰ There is an interesting tension here between the worker focus of the labour movement and the member focus of individual trade unions.

Hyman, 2001; Lichtenstein, 2013). Unions have globally persisted on repression, often by accommodating and restricting radicalism. This has been achieved by both legislation and proactive self-regulation. A move from political radicalism and militancy to more moderate and pragmatic practices has included purging the often progressive and accomplished 'leftists' from union leadership and ranks (Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin, 2002). Similarly, an institutional position as a labour market participant has often subdued more radical outbursts²¹.

The social logic behind the labour movement practice in general, and trade unionism in particular, need be analysed with consideration to their social and organisational composition and degree of institutionalisation (Fantasia and Voss, 2007). Universally, there is not a one-size-fits-all solution given that economic set-ups and political steering vary from context to context. The context of labour market relationships can be approached through the study of industrial relations (IR). This is the study of issues in and around paid employment, the nature of collective employment relationships (i.e. those between management and employees) and the regulation of these relationships focussing on social order and social welfare (Salamon, 2000). Historically, IR emerged as '...a reaction against the waste, human suffering and social injustice associated with unrestrained profit making and employer power in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century capitalism' as well as 'from a conviction that the conditions of work and the relations between bosses and bossed could be improved progressively through a combination of scientific discovery, education, legal reform, institution building, and appeal to a higher sense of ethics and social responsibility' (Kaufman, 2004, p. 1- 2).²²

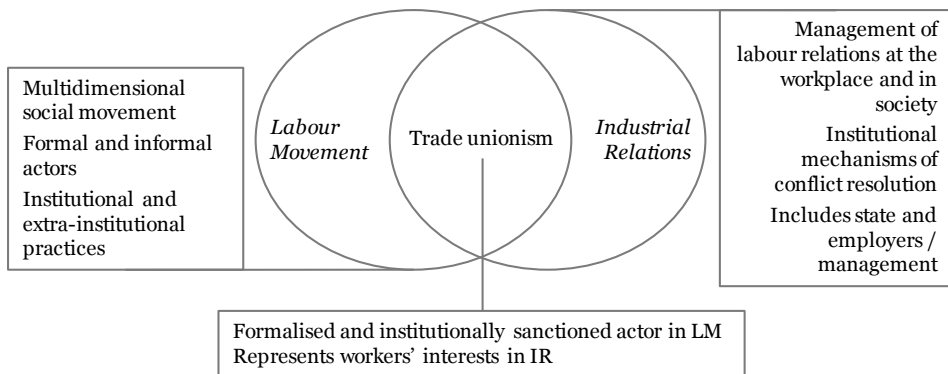


Figure 11 Labour movement, trade unionism and industrial relations

In the following pages, I will first discuss IR understanding of conflict and then the approaches to institutionalise this in relationships and practices.

²¹ Fantasia and Voss (2007) challenge institutionalisation as the cause of labour domestication, commenting that rather docility of unions is brought about by economic and political coercion.

²² Kaufman (2004) provides an extensive historical overview of the various economical and sociological literature that is relevant for the development of the study of industrial relations, and the current schools of thought that can only sparsely be considered in this chapter.

5.2 Institutions, relations, and practice repertoires

Where the study of LM considers the grievances that lead to collective organisation of workers in, amongst other trade unions, IR is a reformatory approach inasmuch as it attempts to understand the cause of and mechanisms that contain and alleviate conflict and inequality. Beyond reformatory, IR considers the institutionalisation of actors, relationships and practices in a system of negotiation that attempts to stabilise conflicts emerging in the productive system through rules created through joint processes (e.g. Kaufman, 2004). Three particular understandings of conflict are apparent in IR literature, namely, unitary, pluralistic and Marxist (Salamon, 2000). The unitary perspective sees a work organisation comprised of single authority and common values/logic aiming to achieve a common goal. Here, the assumption is of basic harmony and stability with conflict being unnecessary, exceptional, irrational and frictional – conflict and its causes are not structural. Coercion and use of power is a management prerogative.

In the pluralistic perspective, work organisations are in a permanent state of dynamic tension because of the disparate interests of a group. Pluralisms established that the good of the individual (employee) cannot be subjected to the moral judgement of management, but their rights should be codified in participatory mechanisms (Koistinen, 2014). Conflict is rational, inevitable and structural by nature. Management of conflict is based on a basic consensus between parties, who nevertheless are in an asymmetrical relationship: ‘management will seek to maintain the maximum degree of power and authority to control the organisation’s activities while employees may seek to establish safeguards against arbitrary management actions and decisions’ (Salamon, 2000, p. 8). Management and resolution of conflict requires procedures and institutions through which collaboration is codified and comprehensively regulated, namely, collective bargaining.

From the Marxist perspective, institutionalisation of collaboration does not reap the promised benefits, since the fundamental disparity in power and access can only be changed with radical action that changes the institutions that support the position of dominant groups in society. Thereby, ‘[s]ocial and political conflict in whatever form is merely an expression of the underlying economic conflict in society’ (Salamon, 2000, p. 9). Thus, conflict is inherent in human interaction. Building of solidarity and fraternalism in the labour movement is key to developing class consciousness in workers and their organisations; however, such organisation is an interphase in revolutionising social, political and economic systems.

Corporatist approaches to institutionalise labour relations and conflict are such, where labour market participation and social partnership take place in tripartite negotiations²³ (see figure 12). The logic behind the tripartite negotiation is to increase predictability of the economy and economic organisation by institutionalising conflict, that is, by turning it into regulation of the productive system (Koistinen, 2014). Central negotiations between representatives of government, employers and employees relieve the local work organisation of having to negotiate more conflictual issues (such as wage bargaining). This can be perceived as the societal extension of the pluralistic perspective that takes into consideration the differing interests of employers’ and employees, encourages the

²³ The International Labour Organization (ILO) is based on the ideas of corporatism, social partnership and dialogue, which it also encourages in its constituent members and through the ILO conventions. The Anglo-American model of labour relations is different to that of Continental Europe or Nordic countries (see e.g. Koistinen, 2014).

collective representation of these interests and attempts to provide an effective mechanism of regulating labour market issues. The nature of institutional arrangements in IR as field are settled through the dynamics of the central actors' strategic choices (Salamon, 2000); various environmental influences also play a role in influencing the conceived strategies and implemented tactics.

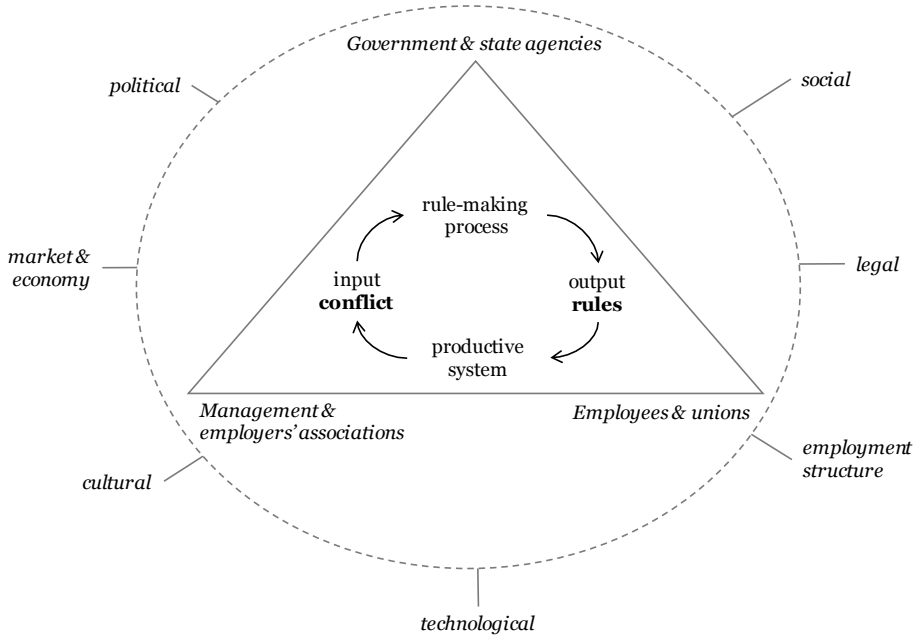


Figure 12 Industrial relations field and environment

At the societal level, unions in developing countries struggle with the post-industrial, neoliberal politico-economic environment. A neoliberal economic policy further results in bargaining power asymmetries. Consequently, in the current societal socio-economic agenda, work can again be understood as loci of exploitation in the Marxian sense, with exploitation further structured in the local organisation of work (e.g. Stiglitz, 2002). The rising demands on labour market flexibility and efficiency transform employment from a lifelong engagement to increasingly irregular and precarious conditions. Industry demands and subsequent governmental policies undermine the conventions of labour market institutions, leading to the deterioration of basic securities and uncertainty of livelihood. Unionisation is a historic and direct response to labour conditions, especially those under which workers perform their tasks. The rise of neoliberalism as a political and economic framework that is hostile to organised labour also translates into societal discourse where the role of unions representing the 'genuine' workers' voice is challenged. Instead, and as I will illustrate later, unions are to some extent perceived as redundant in the post-industrial era and seen as self-interested actors.

It is in the interest of unions to influence (or at least dialogue with) politics and the system of government. The impact depends on political opportunity, that is, the structural, contextual circumstances that install agency within labour movement actors (cf. Meyer, 2004; Snow and Soule, 2010). Political opportunity is multidimensional and dependent on the existence and overlap of conditions enabling collective action: these are, for instance, the receptiveness of the political system or the freedom to express views and grievances openly and without fear of repercussion. Within the ranges of neoliberalism, the state does not secure union survival nor are alternative governments likely to restore former union power: the state and key economic actors share a common ideology where ‘...neither envisages a significant role for trade unions in macro-economic management, on the one hand, and workplace governance, on the other’ (Boxall and Haynes, 1997, p. 568; see also Lévesque and Murray, 2010). Accordingly, political opportunity that is available for the labour movement is effectively narrow.

By marginalising trade union organisations, neoliberal policies are creating insecurity in at least two particular ways: firstly, by removing (collective) bargaining power and substituting it with an individual responsibility. Secondly, individuals and the labour market are collectively in a perpetual flux of profitability and effectiveness that creates enduring uncertainty. The basis for the success of these measures is in the degree in which institutions based on collective power are stripped of their agency: ‘while freedom of association and trade union rights are important in correcting the power balances that exist in labour markets, even workers enjoying such rights are typically in a disadvantageous position. It is far easier for an employer to replace recalcitrant workers than for employees to ‘replace’ a recalcitrant employer’ (Stiglitz, 2002, p. 13) As mentioned above, neoliberal subjectivity has direct influence, for instance, to individuals’ perceptions of unionisation as an appropriate activity to engage in. With the power to shape the labour market being dependent on the general mandate to represent the workforce, unions are vulnerable to aggressive changes to employment both locally and societally.

Union density is a measurement for indication of union power. Density is calculated as the ratio of wage and salary earners that are trade union members, divided by the total number of wage and salary earners. The measure is calculated from net membership, and it excludes union members outside the active, dependent and employed labour force (unemployed, independently employed, students, retirees etc.). Density is generally in decline in Europe, whereas in the United States and developing countries, legislation and/or processes of establishing representation hinder unionisation, keeping unionisation generally at low levels. In its report (European Union, 2015) on industrial relations in Europe, the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion found that the general decline in unionisation was influenced by declining employment in large establishments where union presence, representation and consequently union membership is more likely as well as recent changes in types of employment contracts (e.g. unconventional contracts, such as the so-called zero-hour contracts and project employment). The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI, 2014) connects union decline to neoliberal austerity politics and structural changes in employment, such as the increasing levels of unemployment, which can adversely impact union membership. While the situation in Europe is rather mixed, ‘...in some countries (DK, FI, SE, UK) the loss in membership has been rather limited’ (ETUI, 2014, p. 79).

In accord, trade unions face challenges because of changing environments. Unions need to adapt to politics (e.g. the neoliberal turn), general societal changes (e.g. multicultural work force, changes in education levels), developments in the business environments (e.g. global/transnational nature of employer operations, changes in type of work, attractiveness of certain industries for employment) and changes in individuals' values that influence, for instance, the joining of a trade union as a member. Meeting these challenges requires action and indeed, '[u]nions are everywhere re-launching themselves as "political subjects", as actors engaged not just in collective bargaining and work-place regulation, but also in the broader aggregation of political and social interests' (Baccaro et al., 2003, p. 119). In this way, unions are moving beyond the institutional framework of industrial relations. Alternatively, unions attempt to establish an open dialogue on issues related not only to local and national issues, but also the workings of transnational institutions, such as the European Union, the World Trade Organization or the International Monetary Fund; globalisation, especially related to the conditions of production and human rights; green transformation, and more recently, the ways out of the financial crisis through '...new initiatives for a basic citizenship income, strengthened unions and workplaces, an attack on precarious work and a vital role for the state in controlling finance and governing markets' (Albo, 2013, 7).

In IR, unions have two key relationships: to employers and to individuals (employees). In employer relations, Boxall and Haynes (1997) see unions maintaining relationships on a trajectory between adversarial and co-operative. In either extreme, union power on the workplace may diminish. The adversarial approach may result in an inability to become a part of or be accepted in developing the workplace culture and work practices, whereas co-operation may entail perceived or actual co-optation (and consequently hinder collective consciousness from forming). Regardless of union strategy, employers are often sensitive about their management prerogative and consequently (overtly or covertly) hostile to collective organisation and worker representation (see e.g. Dundon et al., 2010); the employer strategy of decollectivism relies on decentralisation and individualisation of bargaining, union avoidance (e.g. via progressive HRM policies) and union busting (both legal and illegal practices of de-establishing of union representation at the workplace).

These organisational relationships partly influence propensity and the nature of industrial action (figure 13). Furthermore, the industrial environment (the organising power, bargaining structures, economic cycles²⁴ and labour market condition), as well as social controls (people choosing individual action over collective action, whether support structures, such as community solidarity and protective legislation, are in place, and who the public opinion supports), influence collective action. Industrial action is nevertheless integral to collective bargaining. It is the most controversial issue in labour relations, since beyond the direct, local relationship, it has an impact on its environment. Industrial action can be engaged in by both the management and the employees, and it is often the 'ultimate weapon' used to put pressure on bargaining and joint regulation, and demonstrate strength. Indeed, collective bargaining would have little impact without a genuine threat of temporary disruption through withdrawal of labour and consequent of losses (individual, organisational and societal).

²⁴ Boom strikes are frequent and short, whereas recession strikes are infrequent, but severe.

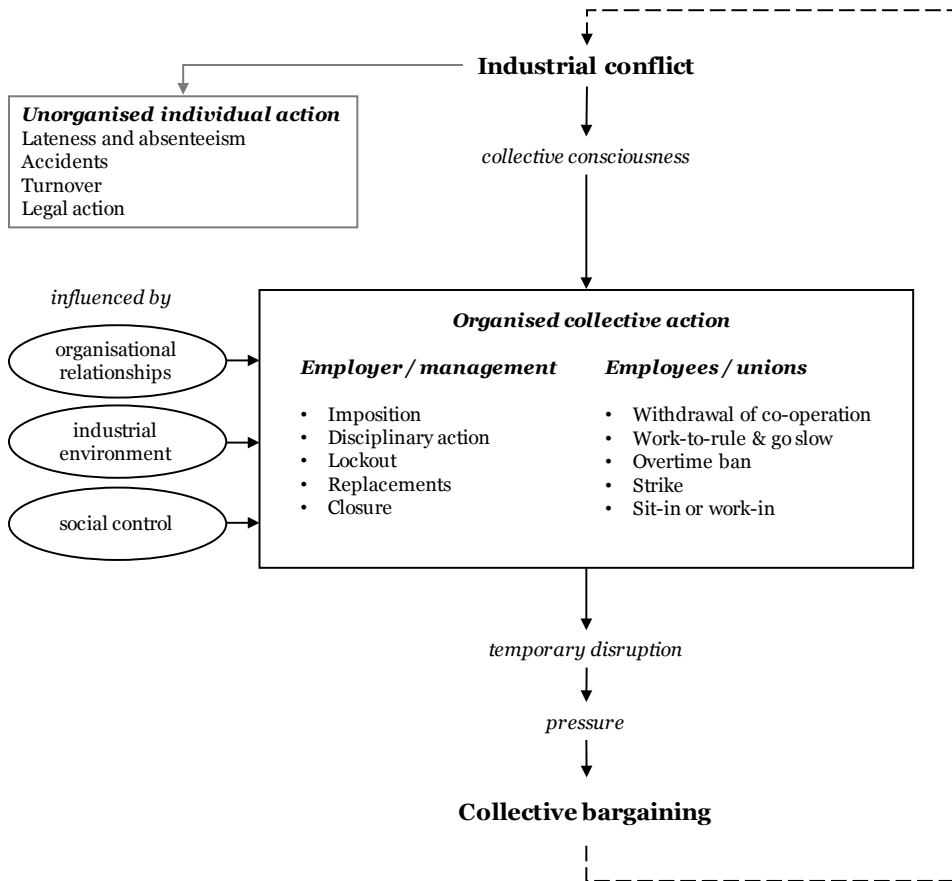


Figure 13 Conflict and collective action practice repertoires in IR (adapted from Salamon, 2000, p. 415)

Given that organised collective action is deemed necessary and collective consciousness of the grievance exists, employers and employees have different (institutional/extra-institutional) practices at their disposal. Management can impose new, stricter rules and targets, extend management prerogative and disciplinary measures, suspend work and employment contacts ('management strike'), replace the workforce, and close facilities (move production elsewhere). Employees and their representation can withdraw co-operation in joint institutions and use formal procedures excessively (working to exact instruction, slowdown by working to-the-letter of contracts and agreements, and without enthusiasm). The most visible measure is the strike, whereby labour is temporarily withdrawn and work is stopped. Strike measures can also include sympathy (supporting other workers at other locales or related industries) and wildcat strikes (local, unofficial strikes), whereby they, being unconstitutional (without official support from the union leadership) or illegal, can adversely impact industrial relations and union image. Finally, workers can take over production and/or deny management access to output by taking over the facilities.

Internally, the individual-union relationship is mediated through membership. Membership has two implications to unions. Firstly, membership allocates power in the unions to function as an actor in social change, economic regulation and job regulation as well as providing member services and self-fulfilment (Salamon, 2000). Union (collective) power generated by individual membership serves to protect the individual members in both the labour market and management relations (see figure 14). In the former case, this takes place in maximising the protection of wages and employment through participation in economic regulation, while in the latter, it is performed through union representation in joint rule-making and participation in management decision-making within the work organisation.

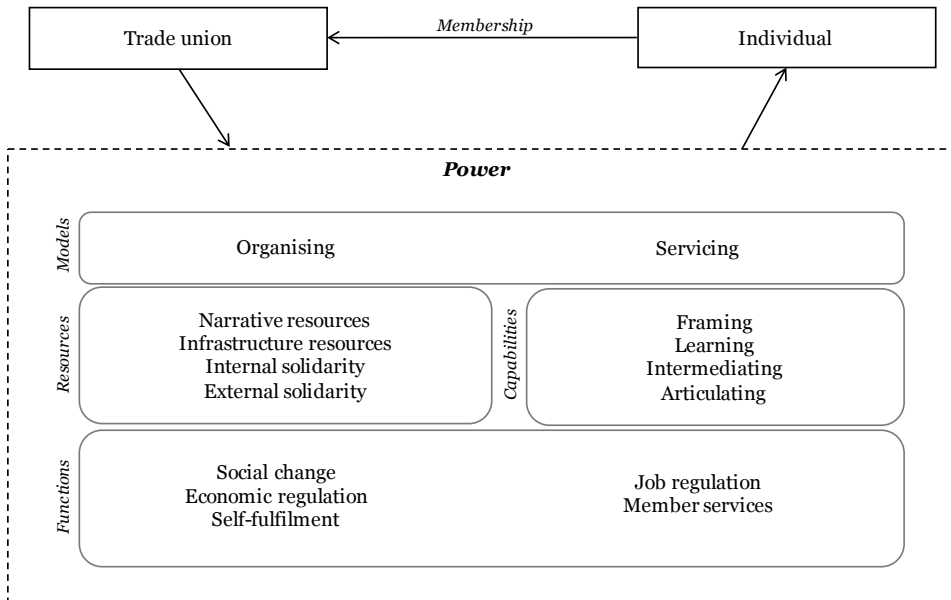


Figure 14 Union power (adapted from Lévesque and Murray, 2010; Salamon, 2000)

Unions also provide members with benefits that consists of a range of services above the 'bread and butter' issues in wage and employment regulation and the possibility to participate in union functions and organisational development. Finally, as social change agents, unions represent the political ideologies and aspirations of their membership. Lévesque and Murray (2010) discuss power as the capacity of unions to act in these organisational functions based on strategic resources and capabilities. The authors define resources as the fixed, path-dependent assets that can be mobilised and competencies and skills of actors (similar to social skill in SAF theory and knowledgeable doing in a practice theoretical approach). Unions' strategic resources and capabilities are tabularised and described in table 8.

Table 8 Elements of union power (Lévesque and Murphy, 2010)

Element	Description
Narrative resources	<i>The values, understandings, narratives, and ideologies that construct identities and motivate action:</i> refers to the pool of narrative heritage that constructs ways (frames) to interpret situations and mobilise action
Infrastructural resources	<i>Physical resources, organisational policies and programmes:</i> consists of material and human resources (e.g. dues, personnel, buildings) at the unions' disposal, capacity to innovate (e.g. framing) to generate and nurture these resources (given field resistance, resource competition and counter-framing)
Internal solidarity	<i>Solidarity among membership that constructs unity in purpose:</i> based on membership cohesion (identity congruence), common participation in the union (by members, representatives, activists, and leadership) and collective construction of common interests (also accommodating conflictual views)
External solidarity	<i>Construction of broader spaces of solidarity in society:</i> describes the quality and quantity connections and networks with other unions, labour movement participants and social movements
Framing	<i>Defining a proactive and autonomous change agenda and strategy:</i> providing a narrative that delineates problems and mobilises action as well as provides an incentive for institutional change, both in union organisations and in industrial relations (particularly connects to local narrative resources and solidarities)
Learning	<i>Fostering change through reflection:</i> adapting and innovating practice based on past experience and by developing an anticipated future, connects organisational memory and knowledge to strategising
Intermediating	<i>Mediating and arbitrating conflict and collaboration:</i> deals with to the processes of mediating conflict (internally between demands, identities, and members' change agency as well as in external networks with regards to changing goals), generating connective action, and network collaboration
Articulating	<i>Spatial and temporal arbitration of action:</i> elaborating on the organisation (relevance and influence) over various societal domains (upscaling and downscaling issues), enabling and linking resources and practices across organisational levels over short- and long-term

Finally, two main models – organising and servicing – can be distinguished (Boxall and Haynes, 1997; Salamon, 2000; Turnbull, 2003). These strategic action models demarcate the roles of members in two particular ways. In organising, unionisation represents a 'living collectivity' of active members engaging in collective action, whereas servicing can entail perceiving members as consumers '...of such union services as advocacy in collective disputes and individual grievances, legal advice and a range of non-industrial benefits (e.g. discounted insurance and travel)' (Boxall and Haynes, 1997, p. 572). These strategies are discussed below.

5.3 Union logics and models

Unions are founded on different logics, laws, rules and regulations than businesses; ideally unions are democratic organisations working towards collective interests (rather than individual profit) in strong membership solidarity (Stepan-Norris and Southworth, 2010). Colin Crouch (1982) assigns the varying logics of unions and business (and further, government as well) as the root of conflict in labour market interaction. The strategic orientations and organising logics of unions are at the centre of Richard Hyman's (2001) study of European trade unions, where he divides union orientations into three ideal type categories: society, market, and class. Hyman argues that all unions need to consider all three orientations, yet base their organisation model between two of the following issues: advancing class interests, fostering societal integration or pursuing economism.

The choices above reflect both material circumstances and ideological heritage in trade unionism. Consenting to the massive pressures from both globalised business and government, trade unions have abandoned their ideological and critical roots to some extent, often in the wry name of partnership (cf. Hogan and Nolan, 2007; Lichtenstein, 2013). This narrower role is known as business unionism – a logic, which stands for the aim ‘...to provide representational services on the shop floor and in collective bargaining over hours, wages, and conditions of work’ (Lopez, 2004, p. 1). Unions differ in their ways of organising and doing, although they still are part of the same movement (hence, sharing some form of common identity and meaning) and have a more social (rather than economic) orientation in their action. The following tables 9 and 10 illustrate these different logics and how they lead to certain models and implications (see e.g. Alakavuklar, 2014; Hyman, 2001; Lopez, 2004; Robinson, 2000). However crude this designation is, it illuminates certain tendencies in trade unionism found in real-life union philosophy and action.

Though unions can construct their action from insuring to building community connections, the logics can basically be grouped under two common types: business and progressive unionism²⁵. At the most elementary, these philosophies relate to the way in which unionism is practiced, and the goals that are sought in action. Basically, the labour movement can be understood in two different ways: as an effort to 1) *benefiting* workers, and 2) *empower* workers. Dan Clawson (2003) further elaborates that in the former case, it is not fundamentally relevant what entity (unions, employers, wage coalitions, government, NGOs) makes this happen, or whether workers are connected and interdependent. In the latter case, the union re-emerges as a social movement, that is, a democratic, communal voice for workers and their grievances; ideally, ‘...the mechanism by which workers get together, decide on their interests, select representatives to speak for the collectivity, and mobilize worker solidarity/power is a union’ (Clawson 2003, p. 189). Organisational structures should support workers to foster mutuality, represent and engage with each other, while differing in ‘age, sex, race, religion, culture, family situation, job situation, political views, and in a host of other ways’ (Clawson, 2003, p. 172).

²⁵ Rather than class or social unionism, I use the unestablished term *progressive unionism* here to designate communalities in union logics that go beyond work regulation and economic aims.

Table 9 Union logics and models

Logic	Model	Implication		
		Membership	Labour market	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance unionism • Relational unionism 	Business unionism	Servicing	Individual benefit	Collaboration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anger-hope-action unionism • Social movement unionism • Community unionism 	Progressive unionism	Organising	Collective power	Conflict

The servicing model (see table 9) is conceptualised as a production process where services, representation and benefits (e.g. hours, holidays and pay rises) are the essence of the union's product. The focus is on individual outcomes with a union strategy that relies on relative size and a 'consumerist' membership behaviour. This is a defensive strategy that renders the union-member relationship instrumental: unions compete on the 'market' for the rights to represent, while members purchase representation with their union dues. The organisational focus is on numbers and formality. Firstly, membership size works to increase bargaining power, but also buffers against adverse effects of turnover. Secondly, hierarchical, bureaucratic organisation assures longevity as well as clarifies the duties and responsibilities of the paid staff. According to Michels (1965; see also Tolbert and Hiatt, 2009; Voss and Sherman, 2000), formality inevitably leads to the iron law of oligarchy. Organisations are thus naturally inclined to develop oligarchic leadership and conservative goals by concentrating power to officials and valuing organisational maintenance over mobilisation. The iron law further posits that leaders' self-interest becomes a more substantial concern than those of members, constituents and beneficiaries.

Several labour movement researchers have pointed out that the decline of trade union membership can to a degree be assigned to the ideology and practice of servicing that has replaced traditional labour movement ideologies and practices of solidarity, collective action and social criticism (e.g. Clawson 2003; Fantasia 1988; Lopez, 2004). Lopez (2004) elaborates that 'the ideology of "servicing" discourages rank-and-file participation and creates a dependence on professional union staff' (Lopez, 2004, p. 59). Servicing by professional staff or forms of benevolent charity undermine the most fundamental issue of unionism: 'workers have both *the right and the capacity to get together, organize, decide for themselves* what is in their own interests, and then to go out and fight to win' (Clawson, 2003, p. 188, emphasis added).

The alternative to the service model is the organising model. The organising model establishes collective processes and relies on rank-and-file empowerment. As such, it is less of a recruitment approach (though this practice remains vital), but focusses on membership self-organisation and establishing an organising cycle. The important issue is to balance top-down organising and rank-and-file mobilising; this decentralisation of union practice carries (potential) conflict, given the variety in roles and aims of the central union organisation and the localities. It also includes cost-benefit calculation, as organising is cost-intensive and unions need to balance mobilising and organising costs with securing strike funds (given that the possibility of an extended strike action can have

a devastating effect on a union's financial resources). While the organising model seems to call organisational formality into question, full-time (organising) staff is needed to assist local organisation in identifying issues, building structures (e.g. for effective communication), education (on local/national/global concerns, and what needs to be done) and redressing possible issues. Organising attempts to build local unity, which is essential for local mobilisation. Thus, the focus is on local action; however, this is precisely the model's problem. A lack of central support and/or failure to building community activists can kill off local action. Local grievances and needs are to be continuously mobilised.

Table 10 Difference of servicing and organising (Organising Works, 1995 cited in Turnbull, 2003, p.504)

Servicing model	Organising model
The union is seen as a third party. It enters the workplace to increase membership or solve problems	Members own the campaign to unionize their workplace
Unions tell members how they can solve their problems	Membership generate their own issues and organize to solve them together
Relying on employer to provide lists of names and workers to union official	Mapping the workplace and staff attitudes is crucial: names and information are provided by workers
Relying on workplace access and employer co-operation	Initial organizing can be done outside work – in workers' homes and other places
Cold-selling of membership by union organizers.	Establishing initial contacts and finding natural leaders to help recruit
Selling the union for services and insurance protection	Workers empowered to do it for themselves through education and support
Relying on full-time officials to recruit and solve problems	An internal organizing committee formed and workers are encouraged to build the union through one-to-one organizing
Recruiting is seen as a separate activity	Recruitment and organising are integrated
The union is blamed when it can't get results	Members share decisions and solve problems together with the union leaders
Members complain they pay fees and the union does nothing	Members make a real contribution to union struggles and identify with the union
Management acts while the union reacts, and it is always on the defensive	The union has its own agenda with members involved and it keeps management off balance

In their work, Voss and Sherman (2000) highlight the importance of internal organisational dynamics in transforming unionism, and argue that often the external political opportunities are given precedence in defining movement strategy and tactics. As has been established (e.g. Boxall and Haynes, 1997; Meyer, 2007; Voss and Sherman, 2000), unions are inclined towards bureaucratic, hierarchical organisations with organising substituted with servicing. The professionalisation and formalisation of the labour movement offers the conclusion that unions and their tactics are institutionalising. The context of political crisis facilitates the entry of new activist leaders, who see the crisis as legitimisation for renewal. These leaders possess skills and competences developed in other social movements, which they may apply in mobilising the union locally. As activist leaders are less restricted by the existing models of unionism, their involvement can aid the turn from servitisation to mobilisation. Thus, activist leaders are closer to movement entrepreneurs rather than professional leaders (cf. Staggenborg, 1988).

However, whilst Voss and Sherman's thesis is alluring, it also downplays the impact of internal change agents on revitalisation. Locals can react to a political crisis and rebel against the present leadership by inciting internal mobilisation and ultimately changing the direction of a union. Locals know how to 'play the game' (cf. jockeying in SAFs) as well as are more ad hoc, aggressive, and independent from central governance: thus, implicitly more mobilised. Professionalisation and formalisation of a movement does not necessarily undermine democratic processes in organisations (Staggenborg, 1988). It is precisely these structures and practices of management that locals can utilise to overturn the iron law. Moreover, Edwards and McCarthy (2004) point out that skills and expertise as resources may be context-bound and thereby not directly applicable or useful in a different context. Whether or not renewal of union organisations (and maybe movement organisations in general) is the consequence of exogenic intervention, the organisational reconstruction post conflict is important. Without explicit attention to strategic and organisational practice, the preceding organisation can effectively become reproduced.

In conclusion, two particular causes of the diminishing of union power in the contemporary society can be identified. The first one relates to the rise of a neoliberal economic doctrine, which challenges the legitimacy of organised labour. Neoliberalism further hampers union power in economic regulation by changing the political alliances and the nature of the pluralistic model of industrial relations (Taylor et al., 2011; von Hertzen et al., 2013). Ultimately, this may lead to a marginalisation and co-optation of unions (Bieler, 2007). The second reason may be a more profound one, relating to the actions of the movement itself. Indeed, the contemporary labour movement has become portrayed as an industrial era mammoth, an isolated, ossified and institutionalised entity (Clawson 2003) that acts incongruently to its foundational idea of solidarity. In the following pages, I will give a short overview of the labour market actors and issues in Finland in the recent past. In what follows, strategic action by the Finnish labour movement as a field challenger is elaborated through the labour movement actors' strategic practices. Taking this multilevel approach connects the various levels of framing as understandings and meaning with materials and competences. Also, as Regnér (2008) illustrates, '...[o]rganizational-level capabilities are essential in any examination of strategy dynamics, but they need to be linked to individual-level and group-level activities and interaction if we are to understand their origins, the way they change over time, and the underlying social (and possibly causal) processes and mechanisms' (Regnér, 2008, p. 568). The empirical material illustrates the collective and conflictual dynamics of value-creating activities in this setting.

6 UNIONISM AS COLLECTIVE ACTION

What is the collective action of trade unionism? What is the value that unions attempt to achieve, how do they frame their struggle, and organise and serve their membership, that is, create value for and with the membership in their conflictual setting? In the following discussion, I will draw on the collected empirical material to answer the second research question, regarding the nature and emergence of collective and conflictual elements of value creation in context, in particular.

In a recent interview Professor Harri Melin phrases the common perception of the state of unionism: ‘the fast-paced global economy has created a situation, where the labour movement’s traditional ways of protecting their members have lost meaning. It seems as if the labour movement is somewhat toothless’ (YLE, 2012, para. 4). Where labour movement is considered to be of importance in developing work and working life, its methods and practices are considered outdated, bureaucratic and stuffy. Such observations underscore the iron law of oligarchy²⁶: trade unions as organisations are susceptible to ossification, centralisation of power and power plays (Voss and Sherman, 2000). As Perkka-Jortikka (2004) states in the opening of her book,

The ordinary and extraordinary of labour movement’s work in promoting collective interests is often far removed from the rank-and-file [members]. Occasionally, even in a strike situation, they don’t know why they are striking. Neither do all dues-paying members know, which union they belong to and who makes decisions and wields power in unions. Commonly, the labour movement is considered an immutable, bureaucratic and dreary bunker where *politruks* [political commissars] are in power. From a postmodern perspective the labour movement appears dead, yet standing: a monologuous organization that has lost its original social movement idea. (Perkka-Jortikka, 2004, p. 9, freely translated)

Similarly, Upchurch and Mathers (2012) see unions condemned to exist in ‘zombie’ form: ‘dead in terms of progressive social and political agency, but somehow still alive as organizations’ (Upchurch and Mathers, 2012, p. 268). Perkka-Jortikka (2004) underscores this apparent inertia, but contrasts it with local activists, who exercise their agentic capacities and skills to support the institutions of unions, while simultaneously sacrificing themselves at the altar of ideological, often ‘impossible potentialities’. Consequently, the agency of unions can be illustrated on two levels, each of which give a particular perspective to the agency of unions to create societal impact (e.g. collective value in terms of well-being; cf. Saren, 2015) and collective value to the membership. My reading of the current sociological literature seems to envision trade unions as either dying business ventures or volatile social movements projects. The next chapter relates this to the context of Finnish organised labour.

6.1 Organised labour in Finland

The Finnish trade union organisations have a total membership of 2,157 million individuals (overall unionisation percentage is 91,9). Union mandate depends on representativeness, which can be calculated as union density²⁷. Finnish unions represent a net membership of 1,514 million, which makes union density 64,5 percent. While total membership has increased, density has decreased from the previous level (67,4 per cent

²⁶ As discussed above, in chapter 5.3

²⁷ The ratio of wage and salary earners that are trade union members (excluding union members outside the active, dependent and employed labour force) divided by the total number of wage and salary earners.

in a 2009 report)²⁸. Finland is nevertheless an exception in Europe and globally in terms of unionisation. Finland has the highest union density in the EU (European Union, 2015) and is only second to Iceland in the OECD statistics (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015).

The field of organised labour currently consists of 3 trade union confederations with a total of 73 affiliate member organisations²⁹. Given the differences between individuals they represent, industries the unions are active in, organisational logics and models, a degree of multiplicity and fragmentation, but also some similarity can be reported. The trade union federations and the unions (and members) they represent, can roughly be divided into blue-collar, white-collar and professionals/administrative. These are all industrial unions by heritage (Kauppinen and Waddington, 2000), and their organising principles differ as follows: SAK organises workers according to function, employment position or industry (particularly the blue-collar group) while the denominator for Akava's membership is mainly (academic) degree and profession based. STTK's organising principle can be placed in between these two, where membership is based on position and industry where employed, but also an educational background. Both STTK and Akava have strong representation in the female workforce and the public sector, whereas SAK unions are predominantly male and active in industry and the private sector (Ahtiainen, 2015).

Kauppinen and Waddington (2000) list some key material and value-based reasons for strong membership in Finnish unions. Material incentives can be found in union's role in administering unemployment benefits, check-off agreements³⁰ made with employers, and the tax deductibility of union dues. The widespread representation at the workplace, particularly through extensive shop steward networks, enables close proximity to membership grievances and allows effective organisation at the shop floor. The position of the shop steward, while performing union duties, is legally protected from employer harassment or dismissal. As one of the Nordic countries, Finland is historically, politically and socially connected to what can be referred to as the Nordic social democratic model (Andersen et al. 2007; Koistinen, 2014). Endemic to this Nordic model is societal coordination and investment in public welfare and social capital through social services, childcare, education, and research and development. A further tenet of the model is the institutionalisation of labour relations in labour market partnership, the strength of the associated actors, both trade unions and employer associations (see e.g. Hyman, 2001; Koistinen, 2014), and their practices, such as collective bargaining. In the Finnish version of the social democratic model, societal steering takes the form of tripartite national income policy agreements drafted by the government in cooperation with representatives of employers and wage earners, employers' organisations and trade union federations respectively. These overarching agreements effectively cover the entire working population and includes salaries, taxation, pensions, unemployment, housing cost as well as other qualitative measures for the working life in their scope. Generally,

²⁸ However, density rates vary between organisations collecting the data. For instance, OECD reports union density at 68,6 percent in 2012 (OECD 2015), ICTWSS at 69,0 in 2013 (Visser, 2015) and the Ministry for Employment and the Economy at 73,0 in 2014 (Findicator, 2015).

²⁹ The number of trade unions is calculated from the information given by the confederations: 20 member unions in SAK, 18 in STTK, and 35 in Akava. This number is slightly different from the data given in the most recent publication by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy (see Ahtiainen, 2015), which lists 69 unions (based on data ended on December 31, 2013).

³⁰ In check-off agreements, deduction of union dues from the salary is made at source. This has two major benefits for unions. Firstly, when dues are deducted directly by the union member's employer, the flow of dues is more secure and timely. Secondly, automatic dues' deduction requires action on the part of the member only when they should be stopped (e.g. when membership is terminated).

the coverage of collective bargaining agreements is approximately 90 per cent of the work force, both unionised and non-unionised.

During the time this dissertation was written, the labour market in Finland was experiencing ongoing, turbulent neoliberal changes, which were based on the forces attempting to alter the institutions and institutional arrangements, onto which peace on the labour market and the coordination of market economy were historically anchored. Similar issues had been attempted previously during the depression of the early 1990s. Politically, the period in early 1990s marked a turning point on the Finnish labour market, when a severe depression caused by the liberalisation of the financial markets in the 1980s, coupled with the collapse of the Soviet Union, was the rationale for the introduction of austerity measures that eroded the welfare state. During this time, the Finnish labour market underwent the most drastic restructuring in the Nordic countries (Kananen, 2012; Patomäki, 2007). Similar measures are currently ongoing concerning political co-operation³¹ and the centralised national income policy agreement framework, which is faltering. In 2008, the board of the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK; the largest employers' association) announced their plans to move from rigid national negotiations to industry-based, local bargaining. This plan to decentralise collective bargaining was finalised as the organisation announced having made this strategy effective by general assembly decision which means that EK will not negotiate central agreements as of May, 2016 (Elinkeinoelämän keskusliitto, 2015). In the intermediary period, a frame agreement ('raamisopimus') for safeguarding Finnish competitiveness and employment was negotiated, containing similar issues to previous central agreements under a new name. With the end of the national income policy negotiations, the pragmatic agreements-based approach to working life was substituted by confrontational ideological dogmatism. For instance, in the past years, the largest employers' organisation is publically promoting pay cuts for workers, a view which the government has buttressed, based on the perceived worsened competitive capacity of the Finnish industry, which nevertheless is amongst the best in Europe and the world, as many indicators³² have shown.

While developments towards changing the central joint governance of the labour market has previously been on the governmental agenda, the current centre-right government in power since Spring 2015 has taken drastic measures to change its activities in the labour market from one of a facilitator to having more active say. One initiative presented by the government was the negotiation of a 'social contract', in which labour market participants negotiate austerity measures, reduction to labour costs (including prominently paid days off and holiday pay) as well as social security and benefits. The alternative presented for the inability to reach a resolution was coercive legislation. Consequently, the current situation has been considered the beginning of the end of societal consensus. With the removal of central negotiations and the introduction of coercive legislation to alter labour market dynamics, central economic and political actors are effectively undermining both union power and societal import. The removal of common agreement mechanisms and decentralisation effectively renders collective bargaining to take place locally, in a more competitive manner (amongst wage-earners) and increasingly beyond the influence and co-ordination of trade unions and collective action (i.e. impervious to collective action; see appendix 4).

³¹ These issues have impact on the strategic framing of unions and are discussed further below.

³² For instance, in 2015, Finland placed 4th in the World Economic Forum competitiveness ranking (<http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-report-2015-2016>) and 6th in Forbes Best Countries For Business ranking (<http://www.forbes.com/sites/kurtbadenhausen/2015/12/16/the-best-countries-for-business-2015>).

Economic and political pressures may also lead to the repolitication³³ of labour relations and unions: a foretaste of which was given in the controversial decision by the politically more militant Transport Workers' Union AKT to withdraw from the negotiating table of the Sipilä government's 'social contract', which in turn led EK to conclude the negotiations ended. Further, the dynamics of the field are illustrated in the organisational changes that take place regularly (such as mergers or movements of unions between confederation membership). At the time of writing, a new national confederation was being organised by 49 unions currently belonging to the current confederations and jointly representing about 1,7 million members (see <http://uusikeskusjarjesto.fi/en/>): the project consequently folded. In 2014 and 2015, a campaign 'Mikä fiilis'³⁴, organised in a particularly large scale recruitment effort by the confederations and their member unions, has been targeting youths and the non-unionised by highlighting current issues in the labour market, and how unions address these in their work.

Another particularly strong dissent message was sent during a national protest action on September 18, 2015, when the three union confederations SAK, STTK and AKAVA organised a #STOP-demonstration³⁵ promoting work, rights to bargain and organise collectively and protesting the coercive labour market measures of the Sipilä government. These measures are considered to go against the Finnish constitution as well as the universal rights to collective representation (as laid out in the ILO conventions; e.g. YLE, 2015). This questionable legitimacy of the proposed legislation is illustrated in one of the visuals used in the demonstration (figure 15), where the lower picture shows a nurse carrying a law book being attacked by a double headed eagle. The picture firstly references Eetu Isto's painting 'Attack', which depicts the double headed Russian imperial eagle attacking the Finnish maiden. The painting was a reaction to the Russian oppression in Finland after the February Manifesto, undermining the autonomy of Finland in the Russian Empire. Secondly, the labour market austerity cut by the Sipilä government was perceived as hard-hitting on professions, where variable wage elements (Sunday pay and overtime pay) heavily impacted total salary, such as nurses, or other low-wage workers. As such, the message here highlights the oppression by a sovereign power and the illegitimacy of such action. Altogether, some 30 000 people participated in Helsinki and 300 000 nationwide (Vuoripuro, 2015) and the activities also included an online-petition (<http://terveisethallitukselle.fi>), a Facebook community and a Facebook event page.

³³ Tripartite negotiations are seen differently in the labour movement. The leftist understanding of central agreements is an unholy union of capital and labour, the latter of which will continue to be exploited through negotiated agreements, whereas the reformists consider it a mechanism of social order and partnership (Koistinen, 2014, p. 82). This dynamic is the source of moderation – militancy conflict within the labour movement.

³⁴ How do you feel about it?; <http://mikafilis.fi/?lang=en>

³⁵ STOP is both an acronym for Suomen Työntekijöiden Oikeuksien Puolesta (for the rights of Finnish workers) as well as a plea to the government.

#STOP

PALKANSAAJIEN MIELENOSOITUS
Helsingin Rautatientorilla perjantaina 18.9. klo 11



Figure 15 #STOP demonstration

Yet, even given these demonstrations of collective power, wage earners in Finland are far from an ideologically coherent group. Identity borders are drawn politically and according to profession, and during the abovementioned demonstration, counter actions emerged. The Facebook event 'Töissä myös perjantaina 18.9. Ja ylpeä siitä.'³⁶ Was particularly prominent. Groups, such as this, question and are in opposition of traditional union activity, which are seen as disruptive to the economy or not addressing their needs or representing their interests (Kauhanen, 2015).

³⁶ Working also on Friday 18.9. And proud of it.; <https://www.facebook.com/events/847916881985099>

While this shows the contradictory perception of the labour movement and unionisation, the general sentiment towards trade unions within the general population has remained quite consistent. In the most recent study on considering the general opinions on labour market policies (TSN Gallup, 2012), 92 per cent of the respondents answered positively the question: ‘How necessary or unnecessary is it nowadays for wage-earners to unionise’, with an equal division between very necessary and somewhat necessary (see figure 16). In a more recent survey conducted before the parliamentary election of 2015 (figure 17, TSN Gallup, 2015), 61 per cent considered unions to be important for an individual in her working life, with 28 per cent considering that the individual can make it without unions. This is in stark contrast to the aforementioned data, which consistently shows that unionisation (and unions by default) are important to the individual. Societally, unions are considered important in economic regulation (82% agree) and in building a good working life (70% agree), yet they should be more flexible (60% agree). Finally, while 51 per cent of the respondents consider that union power should not diminish in the future, only 29 per cent think that it should grow. (TSN Gallup, 2015).

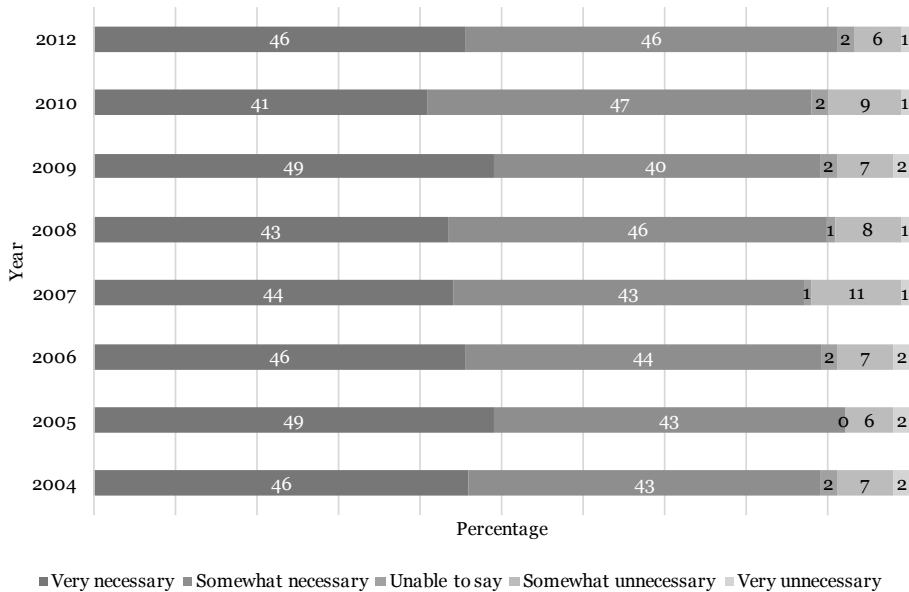


Figure 16 Concurrent importance of unionisation (TSN Gallup, 2012)

On the following pages, I will elaborate on the understandings around union activity and the mechanisms of framing that create meaning around the labour movement and trade unions as they emerged from the empirical research in the Finnish context.

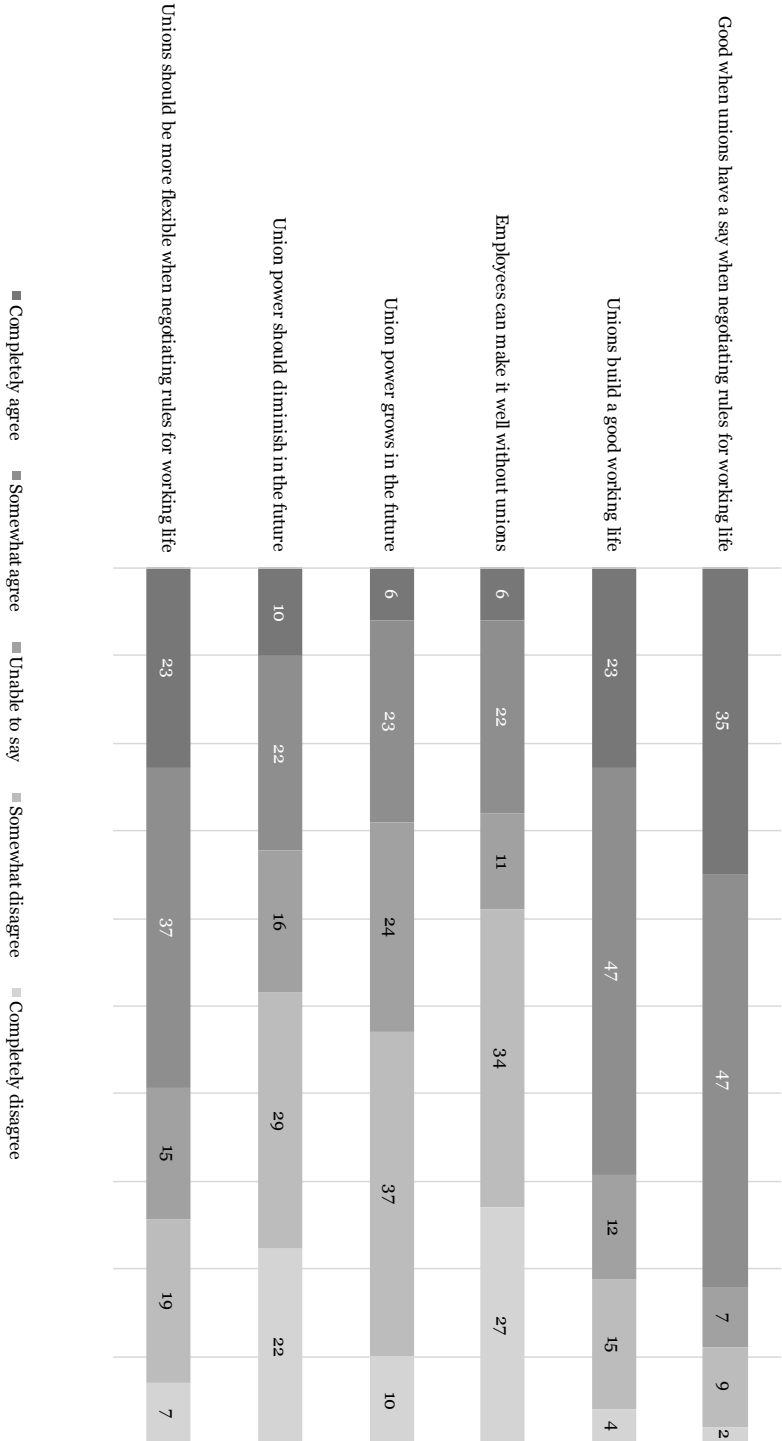


Figure 17 Opinions toward trade unions (TSN Gallup, 2015)

6.2 Field frames between solidarity and individualism

In order to counteract the adversities described above, marginalisation and diminishing societal agency, trade unions are engaging in various forms of resistance practices. Some practices, such as industrial action in its various forms, have been the part and parcel of the analysis of industrial relations literature. In their established form and procedures (such as an announcement of eminent strike action), some of the practical repertoire is ritualised, as Meyer discusses, and, as such, probably less conducive to radical change in the field. Given that trade union organisations are often professionalised and formalised (Staggenborg, 1988; Fantasia and Stepan-Norris, 2004; Voss and Sherman, 2010), how are understanding, balancing out, and changing field, institutional, and organisational dynamics possible?

Other authors (particularly Gahan and Pekarek, 2013, and Lévesque and Murray, 2010) highlight other possibilities to develop and extend union power, that are embedded in the innovative manipulation of resources by skilled actors. This approach follows both the understanding of the dynamics of strategic action fields as well as framing as a skill of drawing upon narratives surrounding the actors and field dynamics. The understandings from which union frames and subsequent practices are extracted need to be examined first. In the following pages, I will aggregate framing as a practice of resisting marginalisation in the larger field of labour market and within the field of the labour movement.

Based on the interviews with union officials, the empirical material gives rise to forms of understanding of reality, which by constantly evolving (and stressing of a particular situational understandings), give a foundation to what frames the field (Goffman, 1986). These common understandings are further connected to praxis, practices, and practitioners (Reckwitz, 2002). Frames and framing, as discussed above, is the practice of making sense of social realities and the everyday life. Frames articulate various elements, such as people, places, events and activities, and generate an understanding of their relevance. The analysis below is based on the questions asked from the union officials and leadership relating to their understanding of membership and marketing in trade unions (see appendix 1). Here, based on the researcher's pre-understanding before engaging with the empirical reality, the assumption was that it is relevant for trade union leadership to understand their members and generate means of relating with them (marketing; see Laamanen, 2011 in appendix 5).

While conducting the interviews, the respondents' understanding emerged as being related to generating meaning around membership and participation. In this way, the functional orientation became expanded towards meaning making, which is the essence of framing. To understand the foundations for the framing activities, a general understanding of the purposes of unions as the key narrative was discussed. Keeping in mind the macro-developments discussed above and the unions' purpose and role as agents of a democratic society, the discussions with the union leadership took a more critical perspective on union capabilities in framing membership. As one informant elaborates:

The purpose of the labour movement as a movement is ... to influence the justness of the society and ... give voice to the many people, who as individual persons would not get their voices heard ... A sort of a channel for giving voice and building justice in this society. **12**

Thus, the value created relates to social justice and democracy at work, which illustrate the foundation of a common understanding in common grievance and injustice, towards

which it is worthwhile and valuable to take action, which often challenges the power of corporations and employers. Constant conflict is nevertheless not a goal by itself. Although building and reconstructing social justice and power in labour market relations includes displays of power by demonstrations, picketing, and if need be, strikes, this is not the only characteristic of a strong union. Indeed,

A strong union needs to be visible. With a strong union, I don't mean a union that is always in constant conflict, but improving the members every day. **I5**

The general understandings for existence of unions and being unionised are given different explanations. The day-to-day focus of union activity traditionally emphasises on either the economy and job regulation or focussing on career advancement. This differentiation would eventually become a significant distinction emerging from the leaders' understanding of union differences. The former includes negotiating and regulating the collective agreement in the industry and at the workplace ('työmarkkinaedunvalvonta'), whereas the latter mainly influences the societal image of a profession or education, promotes advanced training and skills development, and as such may not encompass participation or influence in collective agreement negotiations ('ammattillis-aatteellisuus' or 'ammattillinen edunvalvonta'). From a union perspective, representation is based on either the industry and/or workplace the individual is employed in or the educational background. The individual's position in the work organisation can affect the choice between competing unions. Thus, naturally there are goals beyond getting people unionised to increase their understanding of where and with whom they are organised. This can be elaborated as follows:

We have to have a close connection to the members, so that they know where they are organised, what services they can get and what the organisation's aims and reasons for being are, and how these can be influenced. **I3**

The representational dichotomy provides individual organisations and their federations with one of the main distinctive ideational differentiations. Where the traditional boundaries between work and professions are blurring, the historical division has been between blue-collar, white-collar and academically educated, with the first two unions engaging in workplace representation and the latter in educational representation. This division further bleeds into identity, which is discursively sustained by the particular organisations.

Members are driven by images and identities. Look, I belong to a gold key club ... People do the same work, belong under the same collective agreement, but others consider themselves as something better. **I5**

There is some added value for our members [from the organisational image]. They see it as an [personal] image issue. **I6**

The fragmentation of collective identity is problematic. As the director of the academic union federation pointed out, membership in the federation identified with the federation first and the union second (if at all). Fragmentation further influences the unity of the labour movement. Unions have a historical image of representing white male workers in full-time contracts³⁷. Alongside the ongoing casualisation of labour, societal

³⁷ Controversially, the president of STTK Palola framed the Finnish labour movement as representing the interest of those with secure employment positions. According to Palola, this leads to unions becoming regressive in their openings regarding improvements of working life in general whereby the labour movement becomes a nay-movement not addressing the developments of the labour market and only responding to employers' initiative (<http://www.hs.fi/politiikka/a1449639524058>). This view was to a degree challenged by other confederation presidents and representatives saying that the employers' too

trends on the individualisation and consumerisation of everyday life, multiple social identities, individualisation of employment contract, status, and personal involvement in job regulation are leading to the disappearance of collective identification (Lévesque and Murray, 2010; see also Webb, 2006).

The labour movement has been accused of concentrating only on those in working life and on working life ... Considering the impact on social justice [of labour movement activities] it touches upon other things in peoples' free time ... The idea of accompanying people during their lifespan is a smart one, worth thinking about. **I2**

Also, as illustrated previously with the difficulties of mobilising people to demonstrate against the coercive action of the government, the ranks within the labour movement are less than unified³⁸ (cf. Lévesque and Murray, 2010). The general societal well-being is considered problematic for more active forms of unionisation, as one informant elaborates:

The greatest problem of trade unionism is that members are suffering from a well-being syndrome. People, those who are employed, have it good. ... There is no reason for people to go on general strike. **I8**

If there is indeed a real incongruity between well-being and the need for representation, and collective identity and identification, what are then the explanatory mechanisms of individuals joining unions? The following comments from leadership underscores an instrumentalist understanding of union membership.

Thank God, the number of people joining from habit has gone down. Previously, everyone was unionised, the level of unionisation was higher before. Joining was not rationalised. Today, people think. Is it worth it, why, what's in it for me? What is the [union offering's] value for money [the member pays]? Awareness has increased, people are more demanding. That is why the labour movement organisations need to change. It is not just that I am insured, but how. How you are going to take care of it, is the question to unions. **I5**

We need to accept that not all want to become active members and just want to purchase a bit of security. It's like a customer relationship ... We have some people employed and some active members for whom this sort of an instrumental relationship is an abomination. Because you have to become a member due to the values and ideology ... We have people who join because of other motives ... We have been speaking in just one way, haven't seen the layers of membership; haven't been able to find the right language for the right audience. **I10**

In fact, a commonly shared metaphor has become paradigmatic to the understanding of unions as the insurers of the labour market. The metaphor of insurance aligns with the idea of unions representing and safeguarding individual members' well-being on labour market by attending to their employment conditions and a variety of union service. As the informants elaborate:

In this time, [the reason for involvement] is security in constant change ... You get information on what is happening, what things mean. The unemployment fund as a concept is not as prominent as in the 90s ... [the idea of security] has been traditional in trade unions; it was just said differently in different times, but now, the majority word it as 'protection in change'. **I1**

Why people belong to a union; it's maybe because of the unemployment thing is a sort of an insurance or security against; if there are some problematic situations, that they get help and

have a tendency to negate labour movement development initiatives, but that future of representation needs to have a broader basis and outlook (<http://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/a1449728723823>).

³⁸ This is a long-term issue for representation and identification as well as inter-union relationships, particularly aligning with the interests of skilled (craft) and semi-skilled/low-skilled (industrial) workers.

protection, support from the union. Creating maybe a counterforce to employer decision-making. **I2**

Always when there has been a threat on the labour market, unionisation levels have risen ... People seek security in unemployment funds. **I3**

This coincides with what Kauppinen and Waddington (2000) describe as the core reason for strong unionisation in Finland and the key benefit from union membership. While the coverage of a collective bargaining agreement can be universal (that is, available for all labour market participants), material incentives, such as the unemployment benefits, represent what Olson describes as ‘selective incentives’³⁹. Interestingly, a critique on the dialectic division of participation as coercive, incentivised, or free-riding; Booth (1985) illustrates how social custom (including rules, customs, reputation, and sanctions) could be used to explain membership. While some of the above informants would refute social custom, the situation can be somewhat more multifaceted, as the following statements illustrate:

One third of people organise because of their need for special security, another because it is tradition and the final [third] because they wish to belong to a guild. **I3**

[The reason to join a union] is probably dependent on how old a person we are talking about. I could imagine that one of the main reasons, even nowadays, is the membership in an unemployment fund ... Younger folks may not have a similar perception to this union thing as with somewhat older [people], who often talk about, that you have to belong to a union – this has been the way it’s done. I don’t believe that the younger folks see it that way. They seek different things. It’s not self-evident to be involved, which then brings challenges to the activities in a different way than when there are traditions that lead to a certain kind of unionising. **I2**

The above quotations from union leadership show how instrumental participation, well-being and individualisation connect to the understandings of the current state of unionisation. How mobilisation becomes framed above relates to a central issue of whether or not grievances exist. As discussed above, grievances are perceptions or experiences of injustice and a general perception of well-being leading to a lack of a grievance around which to mobilise works to counter union efforts. If analysed through the well-being lenses, the inactivity of members can lead to two additional conclusions. First, well-being can be representative of work satisfaction and of a state where unions (possibly with other labour market participants) has reached its goals: satisfied its intended consequences. However, considering the contextual description above, this deduction is unlikely and probably ill-advised. Secondly, the well-being syndrome can be brought on by unions themselves, as a consequence of increased servitisation and negligence of mobilisation. This inactivity of members-as-consumers illustrates an internal–unintended consequence.

Is it a problem that all members are not [actively] involved? It is a problem for this 20 per cent [who are actives]. Is it actually a problem to the union and to this 80 per cent? No. It is a problem for this active group ... The problem is [for the actives] in regards to the wasted energy in thinking about how to get the 80 per cent involved. **I8**

Inactivity hinders legitimacy. A counteractive strategy builds identification with the particular trade unions and the labour movement in general, as well as engenders competencies for members to support themselves and just developments in society. Creating an opportunity for members to enact and experience the membership is a commonly shared organisational challenge. Ultimately legitimacy derives from density.

³⁹ Olson (1971) also describes coercion as a mechanism of ensuing collective action. In the union setting, this would stand for a closed shop, that is, a situation where union membership is compulsory to gain employment in an industry or workplace.

Union density is related to relationships with its members. A union's relevance and societal import derives from its visibility. Union management considers the organisational strength to correlate with visibility, most importantly, in the members' everyday lives.

It is important to keep activities going, even if the people don't actively take part, but they might read the articles made about the events and this information maintains the idea that they think this is a good thing. To maintain interesting and good activities, even when most members do not actively take part, is important. **I7**

Unions drive further distinction in different ways; one of which is to support and sustain communality and community amongst their members. Understandings are furthermore constructed in reference to other actors. Coinciding with increasing individualism, collectivism is increasingly aligned along communalities of interests and identity between clusters of members, not along collective ideology, which represents the roots of the labour movement. Understandings of union practice are moving towards the former as a means of maintaining relevance to members, and subsequently, societal import.

Do we consider different groups homogeneous masses or are they different within themselves? We have to listen to what they are saying and do accordingly ... If we don't know what the people want, there will be no organisation in the long run. **I2**

One main issue in our activity is to build or help to build a community amongst our members. **I7**

We can create communities within communities for people to realise themselves ... Can we create possibilities for our members, forums to do this? And support this? Communality comes from several sources and people belong to several communities ... But these need to surface from the field, we cannot invent them. **I9**

Ours [a particular union] is a community, a club, a guild ... When people come to our annual meeting, it's like [a] religious congregation. **I8**

On community-based approaches to unions: '...union issues should not be viewed as separate from people's lives, that this is what they are fighting for, that this is economic justice, not just a union issue' (anonymous union organiser quoted in Clawson, 2003, p. 121). Teleology of trade union practice refers to giving voice to people and increasing justice in the society. Nevertheless, many of the activities in trade unions revolve around the product, namely, the collective agreement and other membership-related benefits.

Surprisingly important are membership benefits. We [the unions] want to think that our main purpose is looking after the conditions of employment, that's why we exist. But that we can negotiate some good [additional] benefits. That is also very important. **I5**

However, there are problems in pinning down value. To an extent, value-creating practices and outcomes are seen as providing more of the same (mimetic isomorphic; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). The understanding and concentration on the particularities of union practice and offerings hide true problems as encountered by the members in their everyday lives, and issues that are relevant to their membership. For instance, as one union executive director found out, major issues of conflict on the work place can arise from rather quotidian issues that the union leadership potentially has less insight into – such as the lack of common lunch breaks:

These are somehow baffling situations ... the issues we are talking about. We [union officials] think about the big picture of the labour market ... how to address the masses and their employment conditions and wellbeing at work ... even though people expect that we do this, their experience is in the little things ... [and it is important] that we know these. **I2**

According to research it [the reason for joining] is unemployment benefit. I am always saying this cannot be our main message. There is too much competition there already. **I4**

We do market analysis on all of our collective agreement areas. We look at the competing offerings and actively examine the members' opinions and how we can perform this. **I9**

Some of the misalignment between understandings and expectations can be accounted by the ways in which membership-relevant knowledge is generated. Regular surveys in the form of market analysis (as illustrated in the last comment above) on an organisational or national level rarely illustrate how membership is lived and experienced in the everyday life of work and free time by the members.

[The member information] we need is in regards to our union, co-operation, networking how our members are doing in the working life and with which issues the increasingly individual members require support and security ... We ask about issues that are topical in the working life and how would you, we ask, how like to develop your own work and work place. We look for the more individual [perspective]. The wishes are often quite similarly told in an individual way. There, we look for the big picture. **I1**

Basically, the understanding of the members' 'real world' can only come from meeting people ... Knowing the basic facts isn't enough, but it is necessary to find the practical working life's details to impact these people. **I2**

One particularly interesting membership group is young people. Here the challenge of mobilising and organising is seen very differently, as the following excerpts illustrate.

It is when you talk to the youth and tell them what it's all about. The majority of youth say that they would have joined the union, but no one has told them anything about it. It is when you look at research – why have you not joined the union, [the answer is] 'I didn't know, nobody told me about it'. There are a lot of these people. And then there are some individuals, who think they don't need it, they make it on their own. **I8**

We get young people from the industry joining the union. In that sense, the common preconception that youth does not get involved does not quite hold. But, how do we get resonant activities? ... They say that the service is what they need, but selling it in its current form, "colours" and media can be challenging ... If the decision-makers change, maybe the way we do things changes. **I1**

Today, they [the youth] are easier to get as members. The largest group, or threat of people leaving are going are those a few years from pension. They consider that they feel secure until the end of their careers – "I'll be fine, and I don't need to pay [dues] anymore". **I5**

In general, the understanding of memberships and their motivations is based on aggregated images of a relatively coherent community or a haphazard collection of individuals. This entails that in the practice of organising, there is a stark contrast between individualism and collectivism. Members are portrayed in terms of rational benefit-seekers, who relate to economic value (for money) as well as psychological benefits (value in security, identity, image et cetera), to which unions provide services as solutions. However, organisational structures also impact activities in trade union organisations in numerous ways. Unions often have a heavy structure with ensuing bureaucracy that affects membership-relevant activities.

Democracy taken to the extremes, where all are accounted for and opinions noted, becomes so tiring, that it becomes frustrating that issues progress so slowly. Labour movement is very conservative towards change ... The problem is that the employers have moved ahead more quickly ... We need to learn from business. **I5**

Member democracy is a big issue for us, and we want to promote this in different ways. We want to reshape our organisation so that we could hear even better what our members want us to do. First, we go for the traditional approach, events where we discuss [with the membership], survey

members interactively ... In the future we want to have a direct member democracy, it's a big thing. The future of these organisations depends on whether we can give the opportunity to people to have a perception that they can influence what is done. **I9**

Furthermore, power is often mentioned in reference to organisation structures, e.g. in mergers between unions.

Why we don't belong to [a particular larger union] is because of two reasons ... [our memberships amount to] two per cent of the total, isn't that right? We would drown ... We wouldn't get our representatives on the board. **I8**

The above quotation shows a discourse referring to the loss of decision-making power, independence and influence as giving voice to the membership. However, the 'smaller is better' is not necessarily a common discourse. Another interpretation of power sees the opposite of representation:

All of our actions should be guided by what our members want and need. We should not forget this. ... We often forget why we exist. We are there for the member and need to build such [an organisation] that they get value for money that they are investing. They are looking for a life insurance of sorts. We have to function to give that value for their money ... Often mergers are hindered by issues of power. That is, we are so enamoured by our own position and power that we do not think about the members or the future. **I5**

The above two perceptions interestingly portray the difference between the fundamental ideas of organising and servicing, respectively. The first illustrates the importance of proximity, of giving voice to concerns and ensuring representation, whereas the latter sees power through representing masses, who expect service for their investment. Beyond these perceptions of power, organisational cultures and structures influence communication, and how information – issues and grievances – from the local levels is disseminated upwards or communicated from the administration downstream. Strategically, it is relevant what role leadership takes in this process.

The message going to the member depends on the participant organisations' cultures. In some organisations, the culture is that all information is given to pass along, whereas elsewhere there are significant firewalls. **I4**

Communication networks are in place. Normally information comes from the shop steward, but people can make contact directly online or by telephone ... The issues need to go forward, or we make a promise that we will answer them. There are multiple channels in place. **I5**

We want to be present in the meetings; that there is someone from the office present. **I9**

Finally, the various arenas of the everyday guide making sense of the future of trade unionism. These future-oriented contemplations exhibit how traditional organising is no longer enough to sustain future activities, but need to be altered to better accommodate changing social practices, such as those related to free time, work-life balance, volunteering, communal engagement and other activities and identity projects.

The future of labour movement activities cannot only examine and try to impact working life, but should include individuals' personal development objectives. This gives us more options, as otherwise, it may be challenging to get new, young people involved. **I2**

Increasingly important is free time; people are not attached to their work life ... What we can offer there and what wishes there are, there is no absolute knowledge on this. What we have found is that traditional activities, traditional meetings, traditional evening activities, traditional weekend activities do not attract anymore. There has to be a family connection or hobby aspect included and in the meantime, we can discuss the traditional things. This is the transformation in all collective activity, in my opinion. **I3**

The best future is in store for those unions that can combine building their members professional identity and the improvement of their employment conditions. That's an unbeatable combination.

19

Concluding from this, and as established earlier in this dissertation, neoliberal thought postulates a moral justification in decollectivising society and a deinstitutionalisation of collectivism. With the consequent institutionalising of the individual, building identification to unionisation is challenged. The glorification of the individual, her personal qualities and competitive ability create an illusion of omnipotence to influence her own future in the working life. In their purest form, individualised employer relations would consist of individuals negotiating their agreements directly with their employers. While unions still work to counteract this, the general understandings and meanings – field frames – exemplified above underline the individualistic tendencies.

Apart from the external pressure, internal problems relate to the distance between members and leadership. Poole (1981) contends that trade union management often works based on approximations of the grievances and issues on the field. Similarly, in the everyday and on the shop floor ‘...[t]here is a pervasive cynicism as to the willingness and ability of the union officials to protect the interest of the membership’ (Buravoy 1979, p. 112). Illustrated in the understandings is an instrumentalisation of union membership or the move from a traditionalist, social custom unionism and the incontestable view that one joins the union to a consumption-savvy ‘bang for the buck’ outlook. However, these understandings can also be a convenient explanation to hide the problems of democracy and power in organisations, such as illustrated by Michels (1965; also Burawoy, 1979; Poole, 1981; Voss and Sherman, 2000). The perceived inactivity of membership and the ‘attractiveness of the union as product’ can be related to the inability of involvement. The rise of direct activism and new social movements are responses to older movements, their sluggish structures and elitist governance. Essentially, unions are challenged to reinvent organisational models with the ability to generate ties that transcend generations, sexes and professions.

Membership is not automated anymore. Is the challenge of recruiting members related to the fact that we cannot make ourselves transparent? We need to work more to get our message across? **110**

What if our main product is no longer attractive? What is to become of us? ... Each organisation is challenged by communality; communality is what is sought, but is sought in new ways and are we still included in these, or do we fade away and people find their own ways of acting and influencing? **11**

Could we change the societal atmosphere so that it would be more favourable to unionisation? ... How could we change the discursive climate so that the labour movement would appear in a more positive light? The question is about the employment conditions of a regular person. **110**

The current nature of capitalism is one of perpetual systemic transformation, in which ‘trade unions are typically fire-fighters, reacting desperately to challenges to the established “industrial legality” ...they do so in a strategic vacuum’ (Hyman, 2007, p. 194). Similarly, to Clawson (2003, p. 28), ‘while corporate leaders [were] engaged in future-oriented strategizing, the labour movement was largely caught napping a did little either to rethink its own approach or to counter the employer offensive’. As I illustrated above, current trade unionism is governed strongly by a field frame of membership-as-insurance. Whilst this individualisation of membership might be a valid argument for initiating a relationship, it may prove unsustainable as a strategy as it characterises involvement as a process of seeking personal gain (security) over other ways of interacting, collaborating and negotiating meanings and value in this collective environment. While field frames can provide a view into what is at stake, it is useful to examine organisational practices for a more nuanced view.

6.3 Strategising, servicing and organising a union

Unions are and should be concerned with anything that can improve the lives of workers in general and union members in particular. (Clawson, 2003, p. 116)

Strategy-making contains a ‘myriad of activities ... [including] strategizing in the sense of more or less deliberate strategy formulation, the organizing work involved in the implementation of strategies, and all the other activities that lead to the emergence of organisational strategies, conscious or not’ (Vaara and Whittington, 2012, p. 3). Strategic practice in unions can be seen to follow from the understandings of reality and the needs to act on them. Strategies are ‘...related to the extent to which unions rely on a top-down versus a bottom-up approach’ (Clawson, 2003, p. 128). What is discussed below is the strategic work in a trade union, as based on the work of administrative bodies. The strategic work outlines the understandings and activities: it is a manner in which innovative collective action in the setting emerges as a response to incumbents.

In outlining and communicating a union strategy, a working group was called together. With the decision to not merge with the prospective larger organisation, the union, while having the possibility to ‘frame’ its existence anew, had inherited a strategy and related documents from its predecessor. Some of the participants of the initiative had been involved during the previous strategy processes. This time, the assignment was to formulate a new working strategy for the years 2013–2017 (this is the duration of the term of the board). This formulated strategy was consequently presented to the union board and representative assembly.

We do meaningful and respected work, and receive meaningful (also reasonable) pay. Our work and free-time are in balance. Our community is just and equal to all of us together and individually, regardless of life situation. **Union vision**

To reach this vision, a long-term (5-year) strategy was formulated. This strategy approaches the above vision from six perspectives: member, society, employer, finances, processes and people and skills (see table 11). These perspectives have individual aims, so that the vision can be reached by 2017. The internal perspectives of strategy – finance, processes and people and skills – relate to the ability to operate, as guidelines for managing the functions of the union. They include important issues, such as the credibility of the industrial action fund and the collaboration of people on various levels of the organisation, but mostly refer to how these elements support everyday action, rather than incite action as such.

Examining the external perspectives illustrates the processes of framing. Understandings of activity as framing identifies grievances and assigns responsibility of the problematic situation. Diagnosing the grievance leads to a prognosis of solutions and strategies to carry out plans. Frames include ways of organising; framing per se is strategic work, generating foundations for organisational knowledge, which is then translated to and materialises in documents, organisational structures, and ways of doing that resonate with both the practitioners, but also the membership and other stakeholders. What was identified above were field frames based on the varied understandings of a multitude of different people, who themselves are variously positioned in the labour movements across unions and union federations.

Table 11 Union strategy

	Strategic perspective	Strategic aims
<i>External</i>	Member	Our employment is secure. Our pay is competitive. We enjoy our work and our work is valued. Our places of work are just, equal, and communal. We are well-informed and know our value. Our union is attractive and positive.
	Society	Fairness, moderation and equality guide society. Neoliberalism and self-interest as ideals subside. Economic growth is not the only goal. Beside the GDP, other measures are used to evaluate well-being. The consensus-based societal model grows stronger. The labour movement organisations revitalise, and their ability to operate improves. Attitudes towards collective organisation becomes more positive. Legislation secures the rights of employees. Solutions are found to address general unemployment.
	Employer	The union has working relationships with the Employer. The employer respects the union's activities. The union negotiates strong agreements and collaborates well with other trade unions in the group. The union helps to build the employer into the best workplace in Finland, one where the employees are respected. We contribute to a long-term perspective in management.
	Finances	Revenues grow with increasing membership. We produce services with the proceeds from dues. Budgeting is made according to strategy and operating plan. Investment activities are profitable and protect the capital. The union has a credible industrial action fund.
<i>Internal</i>	Processes	Union actors have clear areas of responsibility and there are no overlaps in activities. We know to differentiate between relevant and tangential activity. We trust one another and communication is open. We manage and share workloads. We have appropriate and comprehensive information systems. Actors have the possibility to influence their own work and its development. The offices of the chief shop steward and the administration work in seamless collaboration.
	People and skills	The union comprises a competent and enthusiastic organisation of experts, who develop themselves further. The union possesses key competences, but services are produced together with other unions or outsourced. Competences are developed, as the baby boomers retire to ensure future resources of competent actors.

The strategy formulation toward neoliberalism reads as if to expect its demise through the increase of fairness, moderation and equality, which are illustrated as the opposites of self-interested behaviours. The prognostic element of this framing is that the dwindling of neoliberalism coincides with the strengthening of unionisation with the attitudinal environment and governmental action that supports it. The field notes made during one strategy working group meeting reveal that the challenging task of overturning neoliberalism is to be attempted in cohorts with other unions through the union confederation. The diminished societal influence of union confederations with the

ending of the centralised agreement is therewith counteracted, as various unions are to group together in resistance.

The neoliberal practices that attempt to marginalise unions both in terms of affiliation and action require standing up to economic and political powers in working life and in society. However, unions often resort to institutionalised activities, such as negotiations and collaboration, both nationally and locally. Unions do not only oppose employers, but collaborate with them as partners in workplace governance. Ever since collective agreements and wage steering has become more decentralised with pressure towards sectoral and local agreements, working relations with the employees on a local level have become particularly important. Similar to the societal aims, such as the increasing significance of the consensus-based societal model, strategy formulations that relate to employer relationships were intentionally formulated to show intent of conflict avoidance and cooperation. However, participation in the strategy working groups activities illustrate how nuances are built in to the formulations so that they are inspirational (also inspiring to act against corporate power), yet not overtly confrontational. For instance, negotiating strong agreements and collaborating with other unions of the employer aim to build internal power, leading to respect towards the union activities. On the other hand, the union is promising to help the employer in developing the best workplaces in the country through infusing management with a long-term perspective: this can again be understood as insinuating that the current state of affairs is not so.

To the member, the message is clear: union aspires for job security, competitive pay and a good working environment. The union wants to portray a positive image, which is further motivated through participating membership. The motivational frame here provokes membership to communality and equality, but also being informed and 'knowing our value'. While particularly the internal formulations otherwise talk of providing services, illustrating the members in this way underlines organising in which the union supports local initiative and members' self-organisation. Also, servicing can lead to organising: as the union provides the local membership with education on equality, occupational safety, or salary negotiation, the expectation of these individuals disseminating their knowledge at the workplace is part of the model. Organising and servicing as union models are closely related to meaning creation. While framing is a strategic mechanism of the labour movement and its participants, it needs to be rendered actionable to activists and members alike. Skilful framing generates the meaning component in collective and local practices. However, framing, even if successful and resonant, is not a be-all and end-all of union strategic practice. While framing is useful to understanding the effectiveness of engagement, it relates little to other challenges in of union organising. Framing, as Lopez (2004) explains, does not illuminate why individuals, both potential and actual union members, do not engage or alternatively appear ambivalent towards unions.

Often when we blame the union for not doing anything, we should remember, that we are the union
Chief shop steward at an organising meeting

Reflecting the assertion from the chief shop steward above made at a membership gathering, the vice chief shop steward formulated this precise problem in the union magazine in the following way:

Some unions market their membership as a work-life insurance of sorts. The thought behind this is that members just pay their monthly dues, and in return get help in the problem situations of their careers. Such outsourcing of membership and associating unions with insurance companies is a destructive idea. Unions have always been based on member activity and promoting issues

together. A passive, withdrawing member does in no way promote their own cause or the common benefits of all. **Shop steward in union magazine**

Preceding the quote from the union magazine above, in her text, the vice chief shop steward establishes that the opinion expressed is her personal opinion, and that it should not be understood as criticising individual members, but to shake up the set belief systems.

Organising and servicing practices are engaged in by the union officials together with local representatives and members. The confrontative and/or collaborative action need not follow suit from framing to organising, or vice versa. For instance, if union rhetoric is openly contentious, organising as it happens in and around work can be restricted by general agreements to the ways of behaviour, such as formalised agreements of workplace collaboration and status of workforce representation as well as informal codes of conduct. Organising then is submersed in institutions and rules, whereby subsequent actions tend to circumvent forceful disruption. The role of shop stewards is legitimised towards the union through their role in management relations and vice versa. In the union organisation and towards the local membership, shop stewards work for the benefit of the membership ensuring the compatibility of management action and local working conditions with the collective bargaining and supplemental local agreements as well as custom, which relates to implicit institutions that are followed and binding regardless of their unwritten nature. Shop stewards further make sure that the membership follows the above for their part (i.e. ensure collective compliance). Effective organising requires leveraging of intra-organisational relationships and networks and unions build internal networks to disseminate information and experiences, in particular, and to build solidarity. Internal networks particularly serve local shop stewards, who organise collective bargaining and representation on the shop floor. In this constellation, the chief shop steward works as a conduit between local organisation and central administration as well as between different local areas.

Local shop stewards, who also appear in this study, are the unpaid activists performing the organisation and are found to be responsible for interpreting and reifying strategic activities in the field. Coinciding with the view of Perkka-Jortikka (2004), a shop steward is ‘...the workhorse of the labour movement, which is itself institutionalised as part of governing structures of society, spending her work and free time taking care of the issues of those individuals and groups she represents, that is, promoting their interest’ (Perkka-Jortikka, 2004, p. 19, freely translated). The shop steward organisation emerged as the most effective actor and mechanism for establishing common practice over various locations. Shop stewards are necessary to bridge administrative and local action. Some of the non-conflictual tactics led to some scepticism amongst the rank-and-file members and possible constituents. While the union rhetoric above is (subversively) collaborative, resisting local exploitation is one of the most resilient issues shop stewards are faced with. In order for understanding and practice to disseminate from organisational to local settings, the chief shop stewards are included in both spheres. As such, the illustration of a union structure in figure 9 is misleading, as it separates the different groups within the organisation. The chief shop steward pair in fact function in all of these areas, taking part in all of the functional groups of the union.

These interest representation practices include holding meetings and communicating information. Information sharing often relates to the workplace level, where the everyday bargaining and grievance handling takes place. For instance, as the union is responsible for a national representation in an industry, the activities are divided into regional units and their subunits. Where these units have negotiating shop stewards, who work to support and organise on the local level, the chief shop steward is an effective

actor to communicate cross-regional issues as well as those on the group level. While some of their practices aimed to undermine management (for instance, in showing the failure of the local management to adhere to national agreements), they were also essential to counteract the employer's attempts to work regions against each other or introduce variation to ways of working.

The practices here are micro-versions of community mobilisation. The strategic action approach illustrates that union activities need not necessarily be seen as either top-down or bottom-up, nor organising the out – servicing the within; rather strategic action is a mix of these elements, where not a single logic governs all activities. Administration will naturally prioritise issues other than local activists. Administration is restricted by issues pertaining to finances and resource allocation whereas local activists by participation and members' expectations. Similarly, and as already illustrated in the interview data, union leadership can be strongly oriented towards the macro-societal perspective while the expectation of the membership is in the everyday, and much of this societal work is invisible.

6.4 Summary of findings

The findings of the empirical study can be summarised as the interplay between various levels of strategic collective and conflictual action wherein Finnish organised labour is embedded and becomes enacted (see figure 18). The field – its actors, interactions, practices and outcomes – can be analysed as the dynamics of macro-, meso-, and micro-fields around Finnish organised labour.

On the macro-level, my findings coincide with Fligstein's (2001a, p. 46) assertion that it is impossible for workers and their collective organisations to have a dominant position in the society. The 'worker-capital standoff' is regulated, intervened, and arbitrated into compromise by authorities and institutional arrangements. Institutional arrangements redistribute value and regulate between economic gains and political questions (Trompette, 2013). However, a strong capital-state coalition can change the field dynamics towards repression (Fligstein, 2001a), and thus, make value (e.g. job security or salaries) less a compromise. In environments comprised of increasingly hostile relationships, unresponsive authority support (including legal protection) and precarious bargaining and grievance procedures, two general strategies are available.

Unions generally have the choice between adopting 'militant tactics and forge community alliances, or they can try to cut political deals with employers or politicians' (Clawson, 2003, p. 124; see also Elbert, 2015). The manner in which the union officials discuss the current state and prospective direction of Finnish unions, the Finnish labour movement seems to hover between antagonism and conformity. Conformity can be explained by the structure of the Finnish tripartite system and the institutionalisation of conflict resolution as well as the depoliticisation of the movement in general. Yet, union mergers and creation of civil society alliances reveal tactics that aim for increased influence. Mergers increase union power mostly via a large representational mandate, particularly with the declining unionisation levels. Mergers nevertheless come with challenges to internal coherence and power division, which need to be negotiated between the participant unions. Community ties are mechanisms for building solidarities in the society beyond the representation of workers' interest in the focal industry or company.

The meso-level investigation shows how the union constructs its relations between the macro- and micro-levels (this dynamic is illustrated by the wavy arrows in figure 18). The studied strategic work in the union highlighted construction of union collective action frames, that is, mechanisms for making sense of the particular situation and position of the union as well as mobilisation of resources and participation in action. Beyond an understanding of the relational dynamics and goals, infrastructural resources, such as finances, processes and human resources, construct union power (cf. Lévesque and Murray, 2010).

The examination of the micro-level delineates the relevance of everyday local practice in unionisation and creation of value to the union through power and the member through representation and security. Here, the shop stewards and local activists are key actors. Shop stewards are both local representatives as well as vigilant agents keeping the management prerogative in check (Rittau and Dundon, 2009). Shop stewards are key funnels of conflict and order in the field. 'Field' has a double meaning here as in practice both union officials and administrators commonly refer to the local membership (including local actives) with the Finnish word *kenttä*, which translates to 'field of activity'. Shop stewards ensure both management and union member compliance to workplace agreements and regulations (Kauppinen and Waddington, 2000; Pilemalm et al., 2001), but they are also instrumental in jockeying change locally. Organising and servicing practices in the local context refers to solidarity building and empowerment that can be supported by collective identification (Fantasia, 1989; Heery et al., 2000; Lopez, 2004).

In this setting, shop stewards play an intermediary role in the necessary balancing of various understandings. Their practices incorporate frames as understandings with material realities and local skills. While frame resonance would discuss how participants and audiences "consume" the movement's culture by interpreting the messages being offered, making them meaningful, and using them as a basis for action' (Williams, 2004, p. 105), frame translation identifies key practitioners as movement entrepreneurs that are jockeying the field, and how these practices translate frames into collective action.

The environment can be seen to effect the field relations on all levels. Here I illustrate three particular influences, namely, the global competitive environment, public opinion towards organised labour and potential membership. The global competitive environment is utilised as a reference point to illustrate the (poor) condition of the Finnish labour market and a (perceived) need for labour market reform. This line of argumentation is mainly used by the field authorities to push a political agenda. However, interestingly, the competitiveness of the Finnish economy is evaluated oppositely by others, such as the World Economic Forum. Publics further influence the perception of the meaning of participation in unions: indeed, the necessity of union membership is challenged by other means of unemployment protection (particularly the General Unemployment Fund) and the pressures toward individualised, local negotiations. The potential membership stands for the unorganised, whom the labour movement and individual unions attempt to organise. Here, problems relate to the differences between the traditionally organised (full-time male workers) and the current potential membership in the working life, that is, the youth and migrant workers in potentially precarious part-time employment.

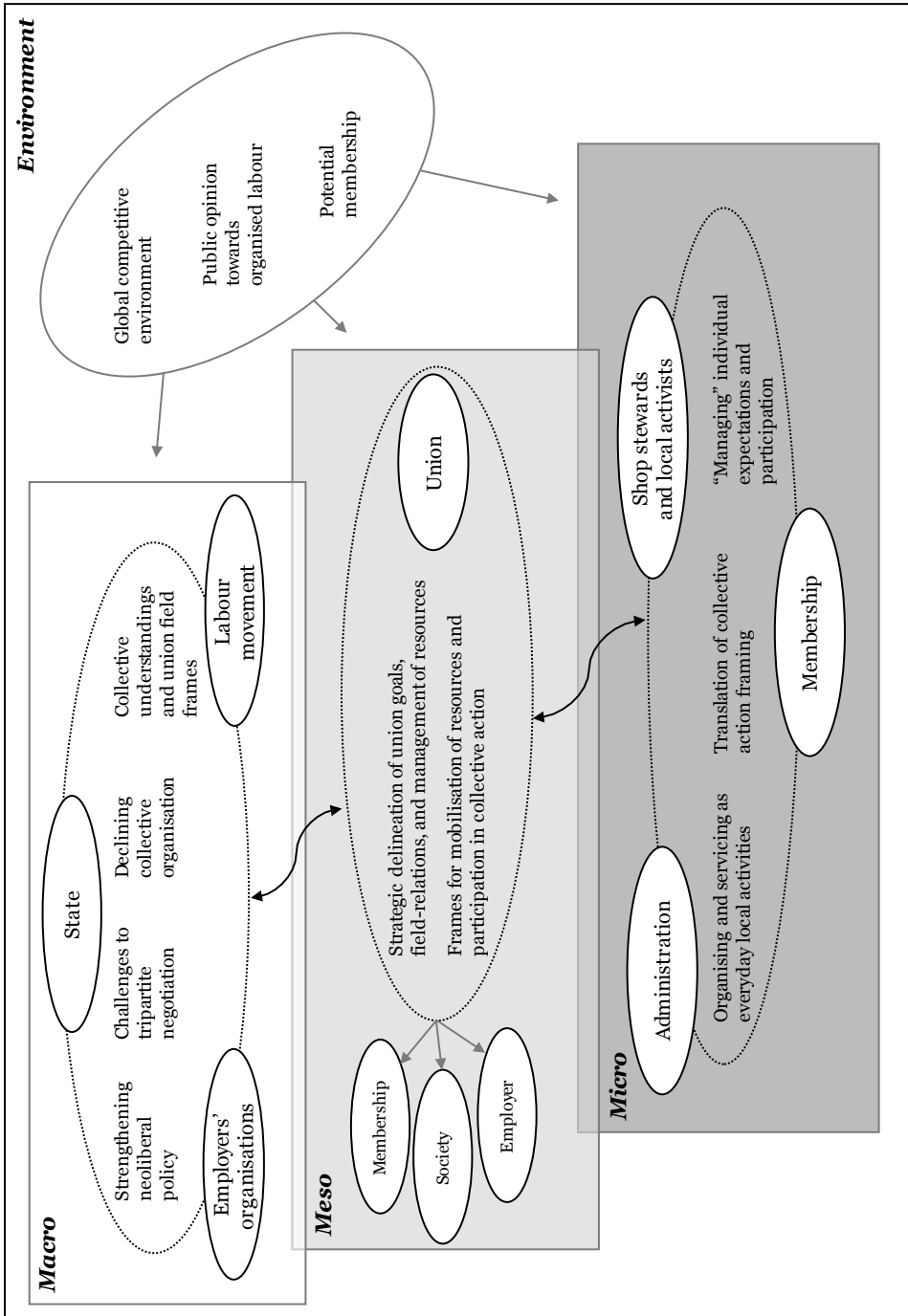


Figure 18 Summary of the study findings

The findings illustrate how fields and their dynamics – structures, roles and role dynamics – are related and reproduced on different levels. Collective action is constructed through drawing on a common position and can be assisted by solidarity mechanisms, such as community ties. Conflict is an unavoidable element in field interactions, which is particularly embedded in power differentials and can be amplified through influence and resource providing relationships and affiliations. While most obvious in the macro-level interactions, conflict can be seen to influence all levels. In the everyday practices, the shop stewards translate strategy into suitable local practice, whereby translation may include alteration that challenges the position of the union administration. Thus, sometimes local strategic action can resist organisational power structures. Further, regardless of union choice of organising and servicing practice, union members may undermine these orientations.

Field interactions influence how actors act to influence the set-up of the field – jockey for position. The approach taken here considers how these collective actors act, and how the practices of collective action are constructed. This departs from the perspective of individual use experience that is currently dominating the SDL literature. Mobilisation of resources in collective practice is central to work in maintaining or changing the field. Particularly, any practice that is incongruent, contentious and working against convention challenges the accepted view, in which service, its providers, other resources, and skills are harmoniously integrated for common good. As practices by nature are collective, as they are collectively shared, they can subsequently be challenged, and they tend to change.

Finally, value in the collective context is socially constructed, contested and mediated. In the labour movement context, macro-dynamics and environmental influences impact how important collective action appears. On the micro-level, value as an outcome can be multifaceted, where the union benefits from active participation of membership, whereas the value of membership can be the safety that a passive membership already affords. Here, the interconnectedness of practices and outcomes is clearly demonstrated. The strategic choice of organising and servicing practices particularly impacts value in the long-term: a more organisation-based and activism-oriented unionisation may enable more innovative value creation practices that draw from the macro-level field position and conflict, whereas a more passive servicing-orientation may ensure less internal political conflict and union power through membership numbers. Passive membership is nevertheless hard to mobilise to contentious practices, such as demonstrations and strikes, or to help them help themselves by taking initiative in challenging local grievances. The servicing model also relies on large local structures that may strain the union's resource pools. This then impacts the possibilities to organise local activities to benefit the membership.

PART III – Headwork

For I have been concerned not to write about these men [sic] as if they were the mechanical products of economic and technological forces. I have attempted to show how such forces limit and constrain people's lives, yet how in the very constraint they reveal the seeds of an alternative.

(Beynon, 1973, p. 6)

7 THE THEORY OF COLLECTIVE–CONFLICTUAL VALUE CREATION

In this concluding part of the dissertation, based on the theoretical, contextual and empirical discussion above, I present a theory of collective–conflictual value creation. This theory is related to, yet critical of, extant value creation theories. The theory outlined here shares the current understanding of SDL, SL, and CDL that value creation is an inherently relational phenomenon, created in interaction, and embedded in a social context. Further the structural set up and agentic capacities in value creation reflect the Giddensian and Bourdieusian approaches. Yet, reading value creation through the strategic action field theory (Fligstein and McAdam 2011, 2012; also Fligstein, 1997, 2001b, 2013; McAdam and Scott, 2005) illustrates the limits of an individual, experiential view to the politics of value creation. Indeed, apart from reasons to participate, individual approaches have little currency in explaining how transformation of structures and fields takes place through collective efforts.

While communities, social systems and networks have introduced a collective element to literature, conflict, authority and change are generally downplayed (or categorically neglected) in current value creation literature. If conflict is accepted as the nature of human interaction, recent theorisations (particularly Vargo and Lusch, 2016) suggest stabilisation and reconciliation of conflict through shared logics. Vargo and Lusch (2016) further propose that institutions and institutional logics are the perpetual element settling and stabilising social order. However, this hides multiplicity, complexity, and dominance. An institutional approach underscoring stability accepts that

actors empowered by existing institutions use their advantages to elaborate institutions in ways that preserve their power and preclude alternatives. Diffusion, adoption and the resulting communities of practice create isomorphic pressures that make conformity a condition for legitimacy, fueling further diffusion. Institutionalized theories of order render alternatives unthinkable, irrational or inefficient. And the prevalence of taken-for-granted understandings means that even opposition occurs in those terms, deepening the paths it contests (Schneiberg and Lounsbury, 2008, p. 649)

Institutional logics can be ‘too broad and too amorphous to really capture the set of shared meanings that structure field dynamics’ (Fligstein and McAdam, 2012, p.10). Indeed, logics may not necessarily hold true for all actors, reflect their position in the field or appraise the impact of actors’ social skills and practice repertoires. Instead of logic, the ideational carrier in this study is the frame. The concept of framing as discussed in its variations here better suits understanding practice in a particular value creation setting: frames provide collective meaning while simultaneously being non-unitary and open for contestation. Following practice theory, understandings combined with materials and competences generate practice (see figure 19 below, in particular).

The proposed theory of collective–conflictual value creation recounts an alternative way of perceiving value-creating dynamics and practices from an increasingly collective and societal perspective. It reviews the messy societal realities through the actors and issues in conflict, their relationships, the practices, strategies and tactics and consequences. The configuration of the collective–conflictual value creation theory as a dynamic composition of actors, interactions, practices, and outcomes illustrates its similarity to the concurrent theorisations in marketing (see e.g. Anderson et al., 2013; Lusch and Vargo, 2014). The theoretical approach to strategic collective action is characterised by the duality of agency and structure (Giddens, 1984). Collective–conflictual value creation is conceptualised as encompassing structural aspects, such as field frames, opportunity

structures and institutional arrangements, as well as the agentic endeavours that anticipate others actions and reproduce and transform the field in question. The ensuing premises of the theory of collective–conflictual value creation are illustrated in table 12. These premises guide a critical theorising on value creation.

Table 12 Premises of collective–conflictual value creation

	Key concepts	Premises	Illustration
<i>Actor</i>	Incumbents Challengers	Actors are collective actors	Collectivity is enabled by solidarity, identity, and common position
	Authorities Governance structures	Nestedness and scaling of field levels	Fields scale up and down and become nested, leading to the reproduction of structures, roles and role dynamics on different field levels
	Publics		
	Field – Environment		
<i>Interactions</i>		Conflict as an essential dynamic	Rather than marginal and consequential
	Unequal power relations	Asymmetry of power	Power differentials lead to domination and contestation
	Domination – Contestation	Institutional volatility	Actors jockey for position, field set-up is not indefinite
			Coalitions for resources and position change
<i>Practices</i>		Collective action	Considers collective practice, rather than individual use
	Collaborative – contentious practice repertoires		Practices create meaning and are by nature collective, but can be challenged and changed
	Congruent – incongruent enactment		Collective action mobilises resources
	Collective action	Institutionality and extrainstitutionality	Incongruent practice and working against convention
<i>Outcomes</i>	Positive – negative	Outcomes are arbitrated	Instead of privileging the subjective experience, outcomes are socially constructed, contested and mediated
	Incremental – substantial		
	Compromise	Homology of practice and outcome	Practice and outcome are aligned and to a degree, inseparable

7.1 Actor-oriented premises

Collective action takes place in predominantly hostile and unequal environment. The politics of value creation mirror this social dynamic. Collective–conflictual value creation rather unsurprisingly implies the premise of collectivity – *actors are collective actors*. Groups attempt to steer both action and meaning in a larger cultural space – *field* – shaped by contending claims over the reality. These claims over reality are encapsulated in field frames and counter frames. Ultimately, frames and subsequent practices shape the field as well as collective and individual subjectivities.

Coinciding with the foundational understanding of what a constellation of a field can be, the perspective promoted here does not preclude a particular composition of the group: it merely needs to be constituted of more than one individual. Value creation actors, incumbents and challengers have their own goals and value regimes supported (or undermined) by authorities and environments through endowments of legitimacy and resources. Collectivities are organised around issues, injustices and identities that frame boundaries between them and other actors, who take up different positions in the field and its environment. Collective consciousness and shared identity ties these groups together in their endeavours. Where groups engaging in collective action are in conflict with their environments, there are also internal discontinuities, divergences and disparities between leaders and followers (see e.g. Laamanen and den Hond, 2015). In the context of labour market conflict, collective consciousness is required. Classically speaking, collective consciousness leading to systemic change is embedded in Marx's concept of class consciousness that leads to a proletarian revolution.

Fields, as established in chapter 3.1, is a rather fluid concept, and fields can exist in smaller groups as parts of organisations, industries and society, or larger collectivities, such as nation states. *Fields scale up and down as well as become nested in one another*: this is one of the central illustrations in field theory. Nevertheless, the understandings of structures, such as networks and ecosystems in value creation literature, do not translate similarly. The assumption is that value creation systems exist as long as mutual benefit and service exchange is maintained. This illustrates the blackboxing of the process of value creation, which thereby conceals structures of dominance and authority. As illustrated in the empirical study, the labour movement engages in various practices to jockey, that is, influence their position. This comes about across the data in how the union shop stewards challenge the established meanings of the labour movement in their own practice. Structures of domination and conflict are this nested in the various levels of fields.

7.2 Interaction-oriented premises

Rather than marginal and consequential, conflict is put forward as an essential dynamic in the politics of value creation. Going further, conflict is not only endemic, but causative when interactions are based on varying understandings and evaluations, that is, regimes of value. In the current discussion of value (co-)creation in marketing, conflict and its implications to field changes is brushed aside as inconsequential. If an understanding of what happens in value creation is based on a classical view of institutional theory and the assumption that an institutional logic provides an actor-independent framework for understanding the world, there is hardly a need to examine conflict. Lusch and Vargo (2014) see this happening self-contained and self-adjusting systems, guided by shared institutional logics and mutually beneficial value creation in service exchange. According

to this view, where co-evolution takes place, actors, and subsequently networks and ecosystems, resist change by sticking to what they know.

The idea of change can be challenged by considering the existence of various modes of resistance to various societal injustices. *Power asymmetries* reify in domination and contestation. In SDL, the second foundational premise states that indirect exchange masks the fundamental basis of exchange (Lusch and Vargo, 2014, p. 58). The explanation follows how exchange mediated by money between a provider and a customer masks the indirect implications of other participants' support to the creation of value. By giving an example of an individual purchasing a gym membership, Lusch and Vargo discuss how the janitor and the cleaning lady are intrinsically linked to the value co-creation between the business and the customer through their work. However, the implications of the influence and the position each of these actors have in this setting are not discussed. The question is open, whether the janitor creates and receives value in comparable quantity.

For unions, the interactions between the employer and union organisation, as well as leadership and membership, are interdependent. The power of representation is contingent on the level of unionisation. This would entail that the membership is the power wielder, yet the framing of unions as insurance companies of the labour market and the servicing approach to unionisation illustrates how the reality might in fact be the opposite. In her research, Liewendahl (2014) underscores the ubiquitous impact of unions to local decision-making, yet also claims that the union had little regard to employees' actual work in value practices towards customers. The agitation that the union-management power struggle over workers' rights is *perceived* to be towards the internal functions of the firm and its disruptive outcomes to the workers and conduct of business. Kaufman (2004) illustrates: 'the individualistic and a-social construction of the theory means that concepts such as working class and social justice are generally downgraded or omitted, while the assumption of competitive markets leads to the presumption that labour exploitation is not serious or long lasting, hours and working conditions are the product of voluntary choice and thus socially acceptable, and unemployment and other maladies will self-correct or require only modest and selective government intervention' (Kaufman, 2004, p. 46).

Extended to value creation, omitting power differentials allows for the theory to engage in a liberal well-being discourse and offer solutions without considering how the proposed solutions are the extensions of the mechanisms that create the need for these solutions in the first place. Value-creating systems are systems of domination and collective-conflictual value creation acknowledges the skewedness of power for the benefit of the dominant actor with contextual impact of field to the relational construction. While incumbents are set to survive in their position, value systems can provide support to challengers. State actors commonly regulate the functioning of fields and govern everyday acts and practices. In this study, the tightening grip of the government over the labour market meant that the framing of both the labour movement and the union organisation were increasingly considering the neoliberal state as a cause for collective action.

A further question is whether collective action in the sphere of value creation has intermediary objects, or mechanisms that alter valuation. Indeed, skills and resource endowments provide a negotiating position, which has implications on the attainable value (this idea will be returned to shortly in the analysis of how outcomes become arbitrated). The verbiage of benefit effectively masks power asymmetries, and the fact that engagement in a field is not necessarily and entirely based on freewill. Consider, for

instance, how the societal expectation to work means that people need to search for gainful employment – be it then as a janitor or a cleaning lady at a gym. People have a choice to engage in the labour movement, but the labour movement actors are less than willing to engage with one another, as the discussion here shows. Thereby, the cleaning lady might purchase representation from a union for them to negotiate a part of the customer's money to land with her. Though the relationships between the cleaning lady and the gym owner might be less than conflictual, those that represent their interests on a larger societal levels can be more conflictual. Of course, if the cleaning lady's union is effective in negotiating with the employer's association of gym owners, her employer might be coerced into paying according to a collective bargaining agreement minimum.

Finally, the institutional setup – the institutional logics and related arrangements – are not considered exogenous to the actors, but pertaining to a fragile, negotiated order (cf. Fligstein and McAdam, 2012; Lounsbury et al., 2003). Here, I call this *institutional volatility*. In SDL, guiding institutional logics appear set by incumbents. Such a view coincides with the ideas that institutional logics are ordained by a higher power and beyond the influence of individual actors. Lusch and Vargo (2014, p. 181) allude to innovative deinstitutionalisation and re-institutionalisation practices introducing purposeful change in ordered settings, such as markets, but they fail to provide a clearer illustration of the mechanisms these actors utilise in practice.

If stability is fragile and negotiated, actors are not, as discussed above, entirely restricted by the structure of the field, but jockey constantly for their position. In relational terms (practice will be discussed below), jockeying means attracting and establishing cooperation with field actors and environments. For instance, political parties may offer a societal and political opportunity to trade unions. To a degree, recent depoliticisation within the union movement, its constituent organisations, their management and membership is consistent with the aim of securing and maintaining working terms with any constellation of government. While there can be some political opportunism at play, the logic is founded in the Nordic labour market participation model and securing potential backup against free market proponents, who, in the purest form of neoliberalism would assign less agency to the state in anything other than upholding the structures and institutions of the free market. Alliances are further sought with civil society organisations in other institutional contexts. For instance, one union leader considers a partnership with consumer rights organisations as possibly fruitful. Such an alliance could, in some cases, strengthen argumentation for promoting the rights and addressing problems related to the situation of both workers and consumers.

7.3 Practice-oriented premises

Practices can explain how value creation routinely takes place. Value creation literature has embraced practice theoretical approaches, and practices have become essential facilitators to value creation. Reading practice and practicing as both sustaining and challenging institutions (Nicolini, 2012; Maeckelbergh, 2009, 2011), a unitarist theory of value creation and its practice hardly follows. A practice theoretical approach to collective–conflictual value creation certainly makes sense, given that practices are routinised collective action; practices need to be collectively shared for value creation to transpire.

Thus, *collective action practices* mobilise resources.

...collectives draw on resources, understandings and meanings to frame and mobilise support and activities that maintain or challenge the status quo. Collective action practices prompt conflict that offsets cycles of contentious action and counteraction. Conflict is an effect of actors enacting practices incongruently or actors invoking contentious value co-creation practices (Laamanen and Skälén, 2015, p. 394)

Expanding on this understanding of frames, this work illustrates how framing is one key practice of strategic collective action, as it illustrates the ‘...ongoing process in that frames are continuously articulated and elaborated during the course of conversation and debate among the interactants within a discursive field as they go about the business of making sense of the events and issues with which they are confronted’ (Snow, 2004a, p. 403). Frames are cultural objects, collective understanding, and action mechanisms that have potentiality until they are translated into local practice. It would indeed be possible to categorise these merely as singular meanings; however, they mobilise resources and action beyond the current situation. The social features of practice become apparent when considering the integration of its constituent actions, governance structures and the resources/material world. By perceiving the difference between the consecutive levels of practice, performing trade unions and trade unionism can be examined beyond singular activities and relational interactions.

Frames can offer guidance, but also work as blinders to peripheral vision and the reinvention of organisational practice (cf. Prahalad, 2004; Schatzki, 2006). As a dynamic social setting, the labour movement and trade unions as organisations are internally susceptible to various political dynamics and struggles between internal groups, understandings and interests (see e.g. Fantasia and Voss, 2007; Perkkä-Jortikka, 2004). With regards to resources, value creation theories have developed through the discussion of resource dynamics, that is, how operand resources are acted upon by operant resources. In value-creating fields, challengers are often less inclined to have similar resource pools as the incumbents. While union density provides representational power and potential resources, the full potentiality of these resources does not actualise unless the stress moves from servicing to organising. In the service model, rank-and-file membership is an operand resource and beyond the (non-)continuation of membership, remains largely dormant. Organising induces and motivates groundswell action from the rank-and-file. Yet, the problem in inciting collective activity is passivity and comfort. Indeed, organising needs conflict and the creation of identity through ‘battle’. Certainly, while material resources, e.g. a solid financial standing amongst others, are important in sustaining activities, the creative agentic/strategic capacity towards a direction of organising can make a difference in enacting change. Many trade unions continue to contest neoliberalism and are, therefore, potential participants in the wider movement of resistance against restructuring. This includes reorganising for inclusion, developing from below and connecting with other social movements at national, European and global levels (cf. Bieler, 2007).

The social organisation of value can refer to the new ways of creating organisation and solidarity between union members, and thereby intensifying the social character of unionisation. Intensifying community mechanisms creates connections between members, which in turn, builds solidarity ties and interaction that surpass monetary gains as value: this complements business logics and the servicing model. Mobilising solidarities requires resonant frames that become translated into action within everyday activity. This is also where union effectiveness and relevance is evaluated. Dissonant frames and local understandings can lead to general change in practice, whereby bridging mechanisms, such as the shop stewards, are involved in arbitrating both

meaning and practice. Where analysis could deduce the values, beliefs, and opinions as the institutional logics and their convergence with institutional arrangements (such as the constellation and function of the labour movement) to either be conducive or restrictive to value creation⁴⁰ (see Vargo and Lusch, 2016), meanings become contested in practice, also alluding to the potentiality of practice change.

Practice is both entrenched and changeable: entrenched in habits and routines – the ways of doing – yet also contested. Accordingly, while there is a certain routine and a tacit side to reproducing of a practice, practice nevertheless changes, for instance, with new practitioners, and the translation of meaning, materials and competence (cf. Shove and Panzar, 2007; Shove et al., 2012; Warde, 2005). As I have illustrated, and what Benford and Snow (2000) call the Leninist question of what is to be done and how it coincides with problems of consensus and action, meanings as framed on various levels become contested and need to be aligned and translated for mobilisation to take place. Contestation takes place through reframing, but also as localities mobilise otherwise. Consider, for instance, how the local shop stewards rejected the dominant field frame of unionisation as insurance. The collective practice then frames membership as helping itself and localities organised to take action for their local needs. This stands in contrast to the servicing, as well as individualism and passivity, that unionisation as insurance implies.

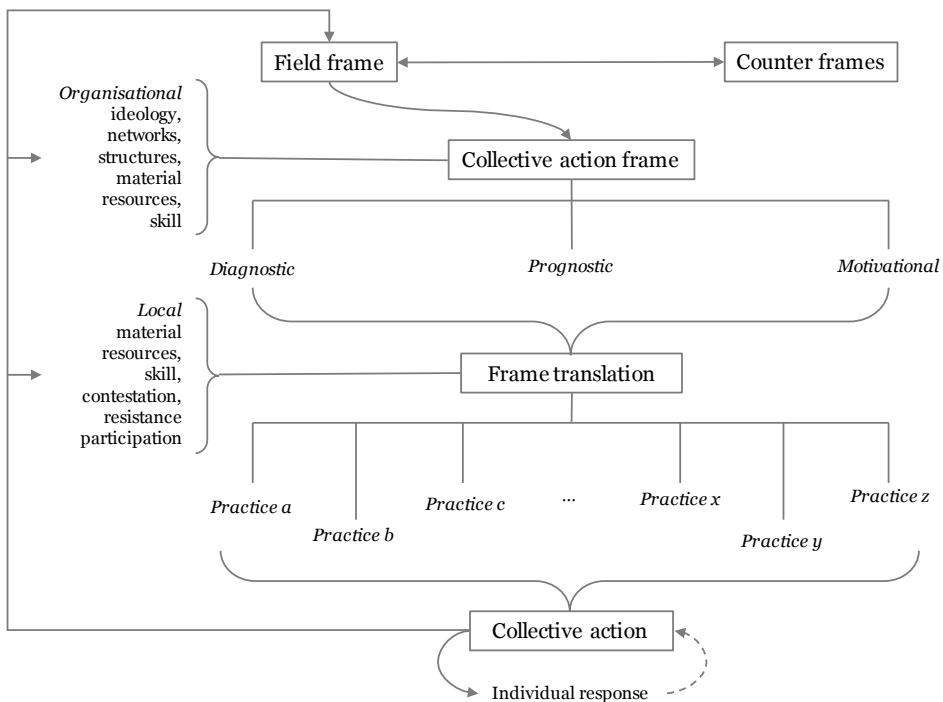


Figure 19 Frame dynamics and translation

⁴⁰ As mentioned above, this effectively renders institutions exogenous to the affected parties and removes their agency to alter them or their arrangement (Lounsbury et al., 2003).

This process of frame dynamics and translation is illustrated in the figure 19. Similar to figure 7, the various levels are illustrated here: yet, this portrayal considers the dynamics between the various levels. The high interdependency and involvement of unions and employers, as well as other actors in the contestation of the meaning of work leads to some general claims about reality or field frames. In institutionalised settings, collaboration and conflict can be equally resilient. Collective action frames depend on organisational variables (such as ideologies, networks et cetera) that are foundational to the organisational calls for action. In the local context, such as through shop stewards, the frames become translated into practice. Here, frames illustrate the meanings and understandings that are combined with skills and resources that give rise to various practices. Collective action frames can also be challenged, resisted and changed. Collective action then becomes the outcome of this practice, while being the practice in its own right. Ultimately, individuals making sense of their involvement, the collective practices and understandings, which in turn, influences taking part, committing to and actively promoting the issues particular groups collectively address. Thus, the feedback loop is back to the resources and activities that make up the basis of framing. There is a clear connection between collective action and individual evaluation, which can be an assessment of the value of membership, participation, or indeed, service rendered. However, based on the empirical material, the reverse loop from assessment to continued collective action cannot be as clearly hypothesised.

If the collective nature of practice is a given, the differentiation can be made between collaborative and contentious practice. *Institutionality and extrainstitutionality* refer to how agreed upon and sanctioned particular practices are. It is a 'strategic choice that both individual activists and organized groups make: to emphasize potential ties between institutional and extrainstitutional ways of a movement or to denigrate and cut those ties' (Meyer, 2007, p. 120). While SDL underlines institutional logics, it further considers mainly congruent practice repertoires. Repertoires are both structuring and agentic: 'as the plays or operas a company is prepared to perform, as a list of skills an individual or group possesses, and as a complete supply of devices or ingredients used in a particular field or practice' (Williams, 2004, p. 96). Contentious practice is connected to an essential grievance and grounded in a shared understanding providing an ideological justification to a value regime and action. Examining union practice, organising capacity rests with officials, shop stewards and local advocates. Militancy and capacity building, that underlie much of the radicalistic discussion on union renewal, are very nascent and challenged (consider, e.g. the mobilisation and countermobilisation during the #STOP demonstration, as discussed above). However, extrainstitutional practices also relate to everyday work in the unions. Where, for instance, material resources provide boundaries for practice, local actors may be willing to resort to the use of their own money to support their activities. While this is not prohibited, it is not an institutionalised practice.

7.4 Outcome-oriented premises

The currently dominant phenomenological perspective magnifies the contingency of the theory on individual experience. In line with this assertion, Corvellec and Hultman (2014) consider value irreducible to individual preference *a priori*, but conditioned by social relations and collective preference structures. Thus, the nature of value as a socio-relational creation rests on the perpetuity of social interaction on a more aggregate level. Outcomes have implications on collective and systemic levels, and can have positive and negative consequences for field actors. The arbitration of value can lead to incremental or substantial change. Thus, field stability is a negotiated state, while conflict remains perpetual.

From a conflictual perspective, collective value can never be fully attained because of the logic of domination, compromise and the contested nature of the value creation process. Dominant ideologies and particular interests are a product of a particular social order and have consequences to the wider environment, resulting in a conflict between incumbents, challengers *and* the environment. If action can have intended and unintended consequences, conflict can be constructive or destructive, and fields gravitate to settlement, it becomes a logical conclusion that *outcomes are arbitrated* (cf. Corvellec and Hultman, 2014; Laamanen, 2012). Collective action engenders differing outcomes to field actors with one or more actors or the larger social environment as the recipients of neutral or negative effects.

Axiom 4 and foundational premise 10 of SDL claim that value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary. This renders value a differential assessment. Yet, collective action and practice outcomes are more complicated since they rely on collective agreement on the quality and nature of performance and outcome. Also, the beneficiary argument intuitively goes against institutional logic. Currently, how the argument goes is that value is subjective, affixed to a particular actor, since the creation process is prone to divergence and can be analysed on multiple levels. Experience is introduced as the common denominator of process and outcome (Gummerus, 2013), whereby the two are (treated as) separate entities. Lusch and Vargo (2014) bridge this divide by referring to the effectuation theory. Sarasvathy's (2001) theory views enacting the future by effectuating it in local practice. In SDL, this perspective '(1) envisions service as a solution that benefits people's lives and (2) integrates the necessary resources to provide that service, oftentimes *creating* new markets through the development and institutionalization of new solutions, rather than just making better (or cheaper) versions of existing solutions' (Lusch and Vargo, 2014, p. 192). This relationship of process and outcome can, however, be described in more political terms.

This is what the *homology of practice and outcome* implies. Reorganising the labour movement attempts to reimagine participatory alternatives to the traditionally hierarchy-heavy form of organisation (Fantasia and Stepan-Norris, 2004; Gahan and Pekarek, 2013; Perkka-Jortikka, 2004; Voss and Sherman, 2000). Those hard-fought structures, that have been institutionalised over the years, have become invisible to the current participant on the labour market: the creators/practitioners are different from the users/participants (Battilana, 2006; Koistinen, 2014). The union officials describe how collectivities form around various issues, and that the future of unionism can be in support of these mechanisms. Alternatives can prefiguratively be imagined through membership, democracy, and meaningful participation, which gives participants the possibility of becoming more involved. This further illustrates a solution to the problem presented in the division of processes and outcomes put forward, namely, that 'as a part of individualising civil society the labour movement must find or at least allow different movements of communities and individuals that respond organically to various real working life needs within and without the labour movement' (Perkka-Jortikka, 2004, p. 295, freely translated). Perkka-Jortikka (2004) also questions to which extent the collective good as a metaphorical entity is useful for promoting current working life interests and how this rhetoric hinders critique and change in the labour movement in general.

More generally, collectivities challenge institutionalised ideas on corporate finance, consumerism and exclusive economic models in e.g. Occupy protest, the green movement, or alternative economies (see e.g. Gibson-Graham, 2006; Haenfler et al., 2012; Laamanen et al., 2015; Maeckelbergh, 2009; Wahlen and Laamanen, 2015). As a model for action, these groups engage in prefiguration, a Marxist direct theory and practice that considers ‘the embodiment, within the ongoing political practice of a movement, of those forms of social relations, decision-making, culture, and human experience that are the ultimate goal’ (Boggs, 1978, p. 100). Alternatively, movement engage their ideal future in the practices of the present and in the everyday (Maeckelbergh, 2011; Yates, 2015). Thus, prefiguration aims to circumvent oppressive, co-optative and violent facets entailed in organisations and markets, underscoring the multiplicity of participants’ collective goals, construction of political mechanisms, transformations of relationships and communities, and alternative worlds and futures to be achieved (Laamanen and den Hond, 2015).

In conclusion, there is room for letting loose of the actor centricity and value subjectivity of envisioning value creation as a complex dynamic social construction. A critical examination of the collective–conflictual theory would reveal that prefiguration might not sit well with the division of practice and outcome in different analytical categories. However, acknowledging this leaves room for future research, which is discussed in the concluding remarks. Before this, I will discuss the theoretical and empirical implications of this research.

8 STUDY IMPLICATIONS AND EVALUATION

The politics of value creation outlined in this dissertation take on the assumptions of current value creation literature and particularly its SDL branch. Engaging the theory alternatively and in an unorthodox setting affords further ontological scrutiny of the ideological and political implications of the general theory construction effort. For this purpose, a dialogue between sociological theories of collective action and fields is related to value creation, its actors, relationships, practices and outcomes. This approach builds on the bearing of ideology and politics and the social skill needed in framing and acting out ideological and political claims and practices. By illustrating these in the context of the Finnish labour movement, this dissertation answers the call for discussion on the role of ideology and politics as central elements in the collective–conflictual perspective, and how they facilitate and sustain collective action. The first research question then posed the puzzle of what the theories of value creation in marketing might gain from a politicised, collective action perspective? Then, when contextualised within organised labour, can there be a correspondence with the structures, processes and practices that can be theorised in unionised collective and conflictual settings that apply to socio-economic settings elsewhere in the society? In what follows, I will consider the implications of this research and the nascent collective–conflictual theory in terms of theoretical, empirical, and practical impact as well as reflect it towards the research process as personal understanding.

8.1 Theoretical implications

What is a theoretical contribution? Sutton and Staw (1995, p. 378) define theory as an answer to questions of *why* – connecting phenomena and creating a narrative about relations and causes to acts, events, structures and ideas – discussing logically (and sometimes surprisingly) has implications for our current understanding and our common sense. While doing this, according to the authors, it borrows from other, hierarchically and laterally situated theories. In a response, DiMaggio (1995) highlights the social construction of theory, often *ex post facto*, which requires attractive framing as well as rigorous research on part of the author. Contribution, then, reflects the novelty and value of the research project. Approaching a phenomenon such as value creation, through problematisation requires a reflective stance towards the theories in use and elaboration of assumptions in these theories, but also sensitivity towards the personally held beliefs (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2014).

Current theorisations provide a foundation to which alternative theories provide input. MacInnis (2011) sees this as *integration* which by nature ‘...involves synthesis ... [and] leads to overarching ideas that can accommodate previous findings, resolve contradictions or puzzles, and produce novel perspectives’ (MacInnis, 2011, p. 146). The theory generated here is a portrayal of the dynamic and contested nature of relationships between individuals and organisations in particular, and society in general, in their efforts to create value. The study is, on one hand, a critical analysis of the social organisation of value and its current conceptualisation, and on the other, an exploratory study attempting to discover a new conceptualisation through collective contexts that encompass exchange and interaction. It revisits and recasts current conceptualisations in value creation with a particular emphasis on the socio-political aspect. The collective–conflictual value creation proposes, namely, conceptual zooming out beyond current assumptions and viewing actors, practices and fields as enmeshed in dynamic development and change.

Collectivities engage in mutual value creation aided by amalgamating processes of solidary, identity and common position while waging for position, power and resources in their social context. Collectivities, thus, constitute network structures and resource affording and mobilising mechanism. Individual participation constructs collective actor positions as well as provide resources that, amongst other, sustain and legitimate collective action. Co-constitution of value-creating actor-to-actor networks is discussed by Lusch and Vargo (2014) as the result of service for service (benefits for benefits); yet, commercial relationships habitually exhibit power difference and conflicts of interests, casting a shadow on the actuality of democracy of participation and equality of benefit (cf. Zwick, Bonsu and Darmody 2008; Cova and Dallı 2009). Accordingly, the collective–conflictual theory proposed here acknowledges different understandings (frames), resource endowments and goals as the root of internal and external dynamics of interaction and exchange. Illustrative here is that creation of value can take a collaborative, discordant, dominated and problematic form both within the collectivity as well as in its relation to the environments. Thus, there is no general assumption of ultimate settlement and stability – but again, how individuals, organisations, institutions interact in contested and dynamic social arrangements; how conditions and opportunities are strategised, and how practices of collective action lead to particular outcomes.

Drawing on the notion of strategic action fields focuses the empirical inquiry on the dynamic interplay of the focal actors with other field actors (such as governance systems), environmental actors (e.g. audiences and other SAFs) and the practices of social construction. How concordant and conflictual field dynamics emerge becomes a central empirical issue. When service ecosystems are seen as ‘relatively self-contained, self-adjusting systems of resource integrating actors that are connected by shared institutional logics and mutual value creation through service exchange’ (Lusch and Vargo, 2014, p. 161) from a critical perspective, we might ask, what those socio-cultural structures and understandings that are masked by an institutional logic as accepted by SDL are, and whether or not these socio-economic systems and their institutional setup in the SDL approach are ripe with totalitarianism, inconsistencies, contradictions, distortions and asymmetries (cf. Murray and Ozanne, 1991; Prasad, 2005).

In this vein, participation becomes constituent of the dynamics of social organisation, its form and practice considered in the value creation context defined by collective action. Akin to the A2A abstraction, the participant need not be a customer, consumer, provider or producer by default. Affiliation with a group and participation and mobilisation into collective action relies on identification with a particular purpose (such as addressing a grievance). Participation affords access to and power in collective decision-making power and entitles the enjoyment of the common good. In its role in democratic organisations, participants are co-constituents of the organisation, subsequent action and value. The collective–conflictual value creation illustrates the social processes influenced by the set-up and social context of their location (the field), the agency and strategic action of its actors and the environments as the participant audiences.

The theory of collective–conflictual value creation elaborates how meanings and activities are settled, but also contested through jockeying, resource mobilisation and contentious practice against a field settlement to overturn inequitable power relations. With a framing approach, the environment becomes relevant as frames attempt to garner and mobilise support and resources from these environments. Framing establishes that understandings and valuation in fields are less than unitary and the environment for resources, skills, support or shock is neither invisible (beyond influence of any SAF actor), nor interchangeable or inconsequential to the phenomenological value-in-use of

a party in the setting. In market(ing) relationships, the striking examples are socially and environmentally active consumer groups that engage firms and industries to change their institutional logics and arrangements, which may rely on exploitation of human or natural resources. Various advocacy and lobby groups can be analysed in relation to how they attempt to influence understandings and societal activities around particular issues. This further illustrates voice as an element of social organisation (Hirschman, 1970).

Practice as a further theoretical approach allows analysing the involvement of multiple actors at various levels of seniority engaging with a practice reproducing, but also altering the practice, its set rules, meanings, and material configurations as they go about their business (Bjerregaard and Klitmøller, 2016; Regnér, 2008; Shove et al., 2012; Warde, 2005). As with framing, the practice theoretical approach also does not preclude the level of unitarism in the concurrent account of social exchange, as illustrated by SDL. From a practice perspective, the implications of the ways in which people and organisations make sense of their social, cultural, political and economic embedding and involvement are especially interesting. By understanding variety in the fields of value creation – including individuals, organisations, networks, ideologies, and social embedding, it is possible to reflect and reimagine practices of collective action that have impact on the availability of human and material resources, and how the enactment of value creation practices can be orchestrated towards acceptable and sustainable outcomes.

When the individual, instead of collective, action becomes a central concern both in theory as well as in practice (cf. Gilbert, 2014), building the identification of collective causes, such as unions, is challenged. The glorification of the individual, her personal qualities and competitive ability creates an illusion of omnipotence to influence personal fortunes in the working life and consumption. In the everyday lives of individuals, neoliberal discourse emerges when the productive self has penetrated the previous boundaries between work, non-work and leisure. A calculative and continuous self-improvement and self-promotion governs the entire span of relationships and everyday activities (Firat, 2013; Webb, 2006). The productive self takes over not only the work identity of a person but also other spheres of the individual's everyday life such as consumption, hobbies, travelling or unpaid work. The idea of becoming a living brand, personal branding instils these non-work related areas particular regimes that govern taste and preferences. The personal brand can be considered a neoliberal regime of governmentality, further commodifying the individual and their abilities in the labour market (cf. Bandinelli and Arvidsson, 2013; Lair et al., 2005; Varman et al., 2011). This study adds to these previous studies by pointing out that collective action can work toward its own detriment, where, for instance, unions may see relevance in supporting mechanisms that resurrect some guild-like properties of workers' personal branding and individuality, instead of collective power. Such a turn may lead to the further demise of the movement.

This dissertation finally calls for further inspired envisioning variety in theories of value creation. With mainstream value creation theory being set in perceptions of unitary logic (such as axioms and foundational premises) disregards how value creating settings are porous arenas where various interactions, practice and outcomes constantly develop in collaboration and competition. A pluralistic perspective is bound to emerge, taking into account the assumption of unity, but also the implications of power in interaction. This leads to accepting the permanence of dynamic tensions that cause jockeying and the need to arbitrate value.

8.2 Empirical implications

The question of how the labour movement creates or destroys value has long been the quintessential issue in industrial economics and industrial relations (Freeman and Medoff, 1984; Turnbull, 2003). Claiming to have found any objective truth as an answer to this question would firstly be stretching both the theory and empirical material, and secondly, be epistemologically awkward. Certainly, my empirical material does illustrate how value creation is framed as building social justice and ensuring security. Value is hence both an individual benefit and a collective good. Despite the evident shortage of research and interest in unionism from a marketing perspective, they are still important social actors and change agents. From a marketing perspective unions are similar to other market actors. In their efforts to mobilise resources, they use various strategies and tactics to attract and maintain members, supporters and audiences as well as advocate their causes. They can be seen, at least partially, enmeshed in a marketing logic (cf. Firat, 2013). Albeit the vernacular of marketing might be somewhat ideologically foreign, practice repertoires in the service model produce market-like conditions for participation and relational interactions.

As is shown in this study, union strategy is more complex than merely a dyadic separation into organising and servicing. Indeed, while generalisations based on one study are problematic, servicing and organising are unlikely to exist in a pure form as well as include other practices than the ones identified here. To secure participation, power and representation, contemporary unionisation is a mix of distinctive offering with more ideological considerations. While this has some interesting implications to marketing research there is generally scant research at the intersection between unions and marketing (Bailey et al., 2010). Some research in value creation literature has hinted towards a counterproductive role of unions. Unions are auxiliary to management benevolence, which is claimed to be better to both business in general and employees' value creation practices (see Liewendahl, 2014). Unions in their inherent troublemaker position cannot improve the bottom line and hence, should accommodate management initiative (Rubinstein, 2001). Similar ideas stem from the neoliberal camp touting deconstruction of restrictive institutions and collectivism as representing a return to local bargaining and dyadic relationships, where value is not a zero sum game (von Hertzen et al., 2013). This neoliberal thought claims a moral justification in decollectivising society and the deinstitutionalisation of collectivism. At the same time, neoliberal capitalism colonises social imagination and co-opts the critique and resistance towards it (cf. Haiven 2014). In my study, this is illustrated by the idea of unions as service providers and members as rational consumers, which is both adopted and contested.

The route out of consumerist business unionism, according to Clawson (2003), requires two elements: rising militancy and community orientation. Rising militancy does not sit well with servicing, whereas community orientation is concerned with giving new meaning to collective action and requires a departure from individualistic orientations. My empirical material suggests that the regime of neoliberal dogma may work as a blinder for the Finnish labour movement. Militancy in the Finnish context might be a less probable option. As the findings of the study have shown, community orientation, both within and outside the movement and its constituent organisations, can prove to be a fertile ground for further work. My research in part responds to what Lévesque and Murray (2010) call ways to break past path-dependencies and detect emergent patterns of union revitalisation by elucidating '...the development of and interactions between [the] different union resources and capabilities and ... match them to particular contexts and opportunities' (Lévesque and Murray, 2010, p. 346).

Further research on the intersection of unionisation and value creation needs to be sensitive to the contextual differences between labour markets, subsequent nature of organised labour, and how the labour movement mobilises grievances and resources. For instance, there are vast differences between the levels of organisation and the cultures of power and politics. The modes of resistance over local and national effects of neoliberalism could be extended to transnational institutions and global labour. This is especially relevant considering the mobility of labour in the EU. It may also be worthwhile to examine precarious work and irregular employment patterns. With regards to unions, their efforts to create value are made redundant in some cases, for instance, how unions can engage the irregularly employed. To an extent, this scenario goes to illustrate the dominance of employers over organised labour.

Beyond the case of organised labour, the theory of collective–conflictual value creation further extends to examine other areas illustrating politics of value creation. These can range from large scale commercial joint ventures, such as construction of power plants or airports to consumption choices. Indeed, the literature in consumption is filled with examples of skewed forms value creation. Some extreme examples include the consumption of alcohol, prostitution, or pornography, yet something as mundane as food and eating or housing are very susceptible to a collective–conflictual analysis (see e.g. Kjeldgaard et al., 2016). For instance, if unhealthy food stuffs are much cheaper than healthy options, and an introduction of something like a sugar tax is highly problematic due to the resistance of the producers, we will see the effect in chronic disease levels and subsequent costs to health care. Consumer advocates and consumer activist groups are globally attending to issues relating to the conditions of production, the safety of products and services to the consumers and the general power of multinational corporations. Similarly, TSR approaches to service co-creation and interaction advocate influencing both the emotional and physical well-being of consumers. Problems for well-being arise from service relationships that are largely inequitable for consumers in their ability to influence the provision of service. From a collective–conflictual perspective, the discrepancy in expertise, skill and resources in exchange settings leads to rifts in interactions and practices. Beyond corporate activities, these discrepancies in service delivery can be adapted to municipal and state service production and delivery. Indeed, the production of collective good – such as waste management, care provision or public transportation – include a highly complex collective and political steering with the implications of decisions (e.g. to outsource a service) having negative implications for some or most actors in the network of value creation relationships. Further, the disinterest of service providers in undesirable marketplaces and the failure and subsequent privatisation of state-provided public service have led to consumers innovating through alternative marketplaces and local distribution systems.

Politicised forms of consumption, such as alternative and solidarity economies, go beyond the service focus of TSR. They challenge the social, political, economic and cultural set-up of the current status quo, and through their actions propose an alternative. These alternative forms of economic activity, that attend to the effects of capitalism in people’s everyday lives, can also be examined from a collective–conflictual perspective as the grassroots activities that people engage in to improve their position in the society and economy, for instance, due to austerity politics and the weakening of the welfare state. These activities, while producing benefits for the focal community and the participants, may be perceived as questionable by others, such as authorities and dominant groups. Elsewhere (Laamanen et al., 2015), my co-authors and I have illustrated this in the context of time banking, which is a local exchange and valuation system, based on a time-based alternative currency. In the cases we examined, time banks faced opposition from authorities. Where these local activities are working for the

local good and in response to the action of governments (such as benefits and service cuts), they were subsequently perceived as counteracting the national collective good through the promotion of informal work and tax avoidance.

In many ways, collective–conflictual value creation is open to both mundane as well as provocative settings. For instance, decision-making about consumption in the everyday family-setting has implications to the organisation of resources and potentially overcoming resistance. While potentially stretching the social movement approach used as the basis of theorisation, family members use the practices here in collective interaction and to reach goals. In the provocative case setting, an example of the cultural production of the extreme right is illustrative (see Futrell and Simi, 2004). While not a study on the creation of value by white power groups, Futrell and Simi's (2004) account illustrates how community practices have the goal of influencing the existing social order. From a value creation perspective, while the production and consumption of white power paraphernalia, music and manifestos, may be illegal or severely repressed both politically and morally, ultimately, influencing and potentially overturning a dominant regime has value for the community and implications to various fields around them. Similar analysis on alternative creation of value in and around markets can take on religious, ideological or political groups that aim to change the societal or market hegemonies in some way. For instance, the value-creating activities of the Occupy movement, voluntary simplifiers, the green movement or the slow food crowd challenge the ideas held towards corporate activities, the work ethic, excessive consumption and consumerism, and nutrition, respectively. Their value-creating practices may adversely impact particular actors, such as multinational corporations, dominant ideologies, e.g. those pertaining to economic growth and the consumer society, or established and accepted social practices of exchange. In effect, these challenger practices may lead to disparate benefits that are aimed to reconstruct various societal structures.

8.3 Evaluation of rigour and ethics

The assessment of rigour can examine numerous criteria relating to theoretical or technical virtues that address whether the conclusions are valid and credible. Trustworthiness should be the benchmark of qualitative research (Creswell and Miller, 2000), illustrating the truthfulness of the findings, which emerge from prolonged engagement, persistent observation and triangulation across sources and methods and critical assessment (Silverman, 2006; Wallendorf and Belk, 1989). However, while quality criteria are important, aspirations to conduct research that produces interesting results require relaxation of the traditional conventions of rigour and rather embrace the 'ambiguity of empirical material and the uncertainty of our interpretation' (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2014, p. 34). Others still 'deny the possibility or even the desirability of assessment criteria' (Hammersley, 2008, p. 42). Murray and Ozanne (1991; see appendix 3) identify five steps in a critical research project: interpretive, historical–empirical, dialectical, awareness, and praxis step. Each of these steps are evaluated differently, with the ultimate criteria being the improvement of the quality of life. From a critical theory perspective, the inclusion of contextual and historical evaluation of the situation and giving participants' voice on various levels pertain to meeting the criticality criteria. Yet, this research was not an action research project nor did it attempt to provide an intervention directly; rather, the emancipatory aims are indirect (Skrutkowski, 2014), illustrating the various ideational and practical mechanisms at play in field relationships.

Della Porta (2014) points out to social movement scholars being inclined to study movements they sympathise with. There are certain benefits and drawbacks of studying

those one agrees and/or is familiar with. Such an approach corresponds to what is common to all ethnographic research: immersion and engagement (Patton, 2002). In effect, the findings are affected by the 'homology between the social actors who are being studied and the social actors who is making sense of their actions' (Atkinson, 2006, p. 402). Prolonged engagement refers to enough time being spent researching a phenomenon so that the underlying aspects or themes can be revealed. In familiar conditions, the aim of persistent observation is to ensure sufficient depth of understanding in order to assess the quality of the data. Nevertheless, one critical drawback in doing critical ethnography in a familiar setting is that when investigating hegemonic regimes – of truth and/or power – and how these influence practice, socialisation into the normative group ideals can be a blinder to seeing otherwise. This is the risk of going native; of 'having completely adopted the insider's perspective of the culture under observation, one is no longer able to reassume the role of an ethnographic researcher, in order to write down a scientific account of what one has set out to study' (Strutkowski, 2014, p. 107).

In order to remain open for the setting and what emerges from it, initial assumptions and influence of taken-for-granted maxims need to be considered: in effect, the implications of studying familiar settings require the researcher to scrutinise assumptions, cultural understandings and their interpretation (cf. Alvesson and Kärreman, 2007). Shifting perspective is a method that increases sensitivity to consider aspects other than we tend to see. For instance, '[a] critical researcher may try to identify him- or herself with a person in charge of an organization of another elite representative' (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2014, p. 30) to allow for the identification of a researcher's own assumptions. The relationship of theory and empirical material can be reconsidered by envisioning the latter as an 'inspiration and a partner for critical dialogue rather than as a guide and ultimate arbitrator' (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2014, p. 32). Further, triangulation using a variety of data sources, different theoretical perspectives, and several other methods were employed in the study design (Patton, 2002).

The empirical material was collected overtly throughout the study with negotiated and organisationally legitimated access to the studied locales and situations. In all group situations, it was especially important that my role was clear from the very beginning. From an epistemological perspective, overt fieldwork follows the general acceptance of the limitations of any empirical material to work as a facsimile of reality, since any situation and subsequent observation made is affected by the presence of the researcher. Overt research represents ethical conduct in fieldwork (Neyland, 2008; Skrutkowski, 2014). Ethical considerations were different in the two research stages. For the interviews, during the first phase, access was based on the informant's interest to engage in discussion. The description given in the initial contact was elaborated in person during the meeting. The expressed consent to record and use the material was received. Access to conduct the ethnography was negotiated with the leadership (president and executive director) of the union. During the fieldwork, I made sure that the respondents were aware of my role in the particular situation. In situations when new individuals were involved, I would present myself (or be presented by an official union representative) as a researcher, working on a union-related dissertation project. I believe that my presence was indeed an intervention. My involvement in union activities included organising these very activities and taking part in them. Since I held no official union position, my role was not one of a full participant, but a participant-as-observer, that is, a friend and a neutral researcher (Balsiger and Lambelet, 2014). Finally, all the material was stored and handled with care. Inasmuch as materials given to me were identified as confidential, they were reported in any exact detail here. A confidentiality agreement was not signed between the union and myself.

Assessing critical research is founded on the assumption that research is not just for producing knowledge, but the actions of the researcher should be 'directed towards bringing about some improvement in, or radical transformation of, the world' (Hammersley, 2008, p. 46). Seale (2004) argues against this by saying that 'one person's liberation may be another's oppression, and that "emancipatory" positions too often involve closed minds' (Seale, 2004, p. 379). Agreeing more with the former and with Murray and Ozanne's (1991) position on proclaimed politics of a research position, I have attempted to transparently portray the politics of this project. While the main objective here was theoretical development and critique of value creation literature, the study also included practical implications. The participation of an outsider in union workings introduces an element of change; in this research project, this was quickly ameliorated by quickly rapport and the 'invisibility' of my role as a researcher.

9 CONCLUDING REMARKS

A critique is not a matter of saying that things are not right as they are. It is a matter of pointing out what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices we accept rest ... Criticism is a matter of flushing out that thought and trying to change it: to show that things are not as self-evident as one believed, to see what is accepted as self-evident will no longer be accepted as such. Practicing criticism is a matter of making facile gestures difficult. (Foucault, 1988, p. 154-155)

There is more room for heterodoxy, and even heresy, in value creation theorising. Currently, the fundamental problem is the reproduction of the dominant episteme. This reproduction can be countered through critique. As different episteme are beyond definition of either good or bad, critique is to be used to show the types of issues dominant episteme are saturated with. As I have argued in this dissertation, individuals, groups, organisations and institutions are interconnected across various understanding, performance and material arrangements. These arrangements generate various forms of collective actions that stabilise, (re)produce and contest social life. Politics of value creation illustrates the weight that people individually and collectively give to an object or an issue; the social construction of meaning and valuation, its conventions and institutions; the authority afforded through these social constructions and the political struggle between different social groups to maintain and change the above. This suggests that actions are not merely dictated by the structure, but the understandings of the positions and relations of actors that are then translated into practices and outcomes. Collective undertakings aim to create benefits for their constituencies, address their grievances, and change those adverse societal dynamics.

The critique is aimed at liberalist tale of ‘value for all’ where ‘freedom to develop and apply competences is “at the heart of social and economic development”’ (Williams, 2012, p. 473; see also Lusch and Vargo, 2014). Then research should be more critical towards what is politically at stake. There are glimpses of more nuanced potentials and contestable implications of value creation in the recent development of theory in how a breakdown of economic activity can have a long shadow on social relations and that externalities can impact activities. These are nascent topics to which this dissertation contributes to by critically examining the politics of value creation and theorising collective and conflictual elements of value creation. Yet, I also illustrate how the long shadow of the social impacts the economic. Instantiations of this can be seen in how the social practice of unionisation on various levels of the movement impact the collective organisations from the within and also which implications their activities have to other actors in the economy, and larger, in the society. Such a theoretical development in value creation literature can outline a way to increasing reflexive and socially relevant research (cf. Saren, 2015). ‘Socially relevant’ here is understood as going beyond neutral stances to examining value and its beneficiaries to social, political and economic meanings and impacts to life.

By presenting the theorisation that allows for a conceptual and empirical analysis of collective actors, their interactions and practices in conflict and the outcome of such conflictual value creation, I answer the first research question – *How do the politics of value creation broaden the current theory of value creation?* – set in the beginning of the study. By pointing out to conflict inherent to determining and attaining some form of collective good, marketing theories and theories of value creation can be more attuned to being socially relevant. The theorisation further addresses how, for instance, it becomes possible to ensure that new forms of value creation that follow effectuation and prefiguration can not only meet the needs for resources, but also provide individuals,

communities and societies as ecosystems benefits and a brighter future. The downfall can be that our theories aid the advancement of neoliberalism, where consumer culture renders individuals as dupes of the machinery. In this scenario, movements, such as organised labour, finally lose their radical imagination and politics. Further examination of the politics of value creation would need to address the dimensions of value, such as pragmatism, political moderation, and radical militancy.

Attending to the second research question – *What is the nature of the collective and conflictual elements of value creation, and how do these emerge in context?* – from what has been discussed, an easy conclusion would be that unionised value is created somewhere in the disparity between labour collectivism and capitalist production as guiding ideologies. Yet, a critical assessment from this perspective is to which extent the labour movement and its constituent organisations produce a consumerist frame. There is no escape that unions are an effective institution, a machinery for the production of collective upheaval and subsequent the ‘consumption’ of a unionised remedy. Framing is a strategic practice that illustrates and builds union struggle as well as benefits and the need for action. This comes close to value propositions in marketing theory. The translation of the frames relates to the interactive fulfilment of promises and the collective attainment of set goals through both servicing and organising. In future research endeavours directed towards examining organisational and social practices should utilise other methods, such as content analysis, to extend the vision to the performance of practices. These could be contrasted to the findings of this dissertation, which are limited because of the inherent cost of doing ethnography. Taking the individual perspective when elaborating collective action practices can inform whether or not collectivism as practiced resonates with its participants. The detection of communalities and discrepancies should provide for interesting ways of theorising collectivities, and their individual and collective actions that create value in their respective fields and their differing politics⁴¹.

⁴¹ As Skunk Anansie insistently exclaim, indeed ‘Yes, it’s f**king political, everything’s political’

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APPENDIX 1 INTERVIEW GUIDE

- Basic information
 - Union: what is the mission of the union/what is the union offering
 - Membership: who is responsible for the membership
- What is the meaning of marketing in the labour movement
 - What is marketing
 - What are the benefits of marketing (what is to be gained)
- Who is the member
 - How is the membership researched
 - What sort of information does the union have on the members
 - What information does the union need (need to know)
- Meaning of membership
 - Why do people unionise: expectations
 - What is the use of membership: experience
 - How do benefits emerge/are benefits defined, why
 - How is member activity visible, how can members be activated
- How is the union/the labour movement visible in a member's everyday life
- How are members visible in strategy and administration
 - How can members influence
 - Meaning of membership in this context
 - Types of membership
- Contemporary challenges in membership
 - Acquisition, turnover, competitive activity, employer relations
 - How are these actions visible in union activities
- How does the union federation support membership work
 - Role of the federation
- Other comments?

APPENDIX 2 INTERVIEW REQUEST

Hello.

My name is Mikko Laamanen and I'm a doctoral student at Hanken School of Economics. In my dissertation I'm researching organising in the labour movement and especially the meanings attached to participation (by and for the member). For my dissertation research and especially for a subsequent scientific article I would like to discuss with you about the member relations of your organisation and its practices. You were referred to me by [*name and organisation of referrer*] as a discussion partner and expert in organisational activities. The duration of our discussion I estimate 60 to 90 minutes and I suggest [*date*] at a time convenient to you.

I hope that you can participate in my research. Please contact me by email or by telephone. Thank you.

Best regards,

Mikko Laamanen

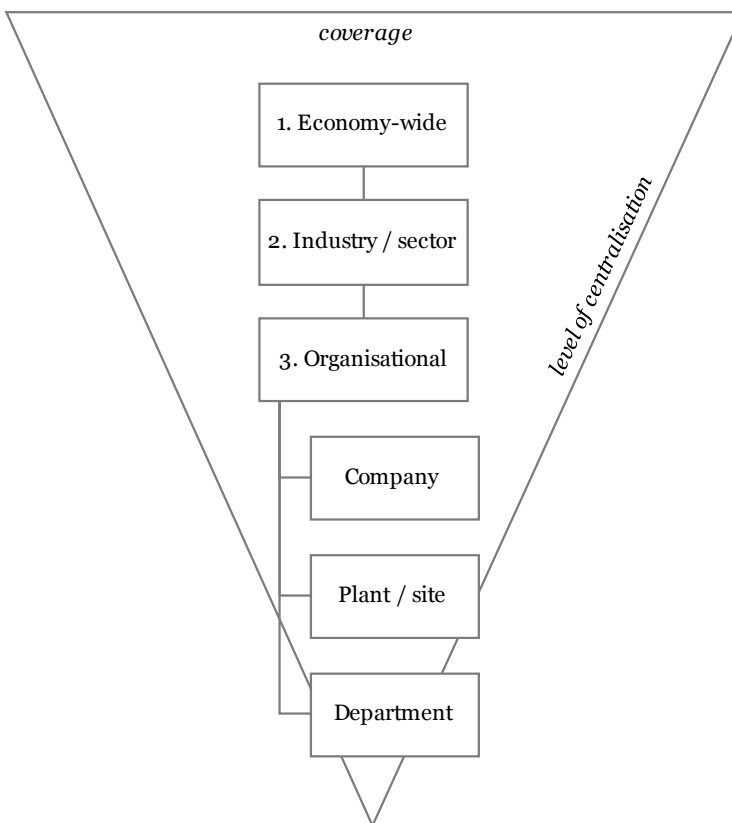
APPENDIX 3 EVALUATIVE CRITERIA FOR CRITICAL THEORY

Element	Questions
<i>Interpretive</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were all relevant social groups identified? • Did the researcher's understanding evolve as more was learned? • Did the researcher see the situation in the same way as the social actors (using their language and concepts)? • Is the understanding based on the meanings and values of the people who are involved? • Are the intersubjective understandings grounded historically? • Did the researcher employ a dialogical, hermeneutical method? • Is the account coherent and complete?
<i>Historical-empirical</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all relevant social processes and structures identified? • Have all relevant empirical studies been examined? • Were new studies initiated to fill in any gaps? • Is the understanding of the social conditions historically grounded? • Has the analysis focused on the historical totality? • Is the social constructedness of reality transparent?
<i>Dialectical</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we understand the dynamic relationship between the social conditions and the intersubjective understandings? • Are the interests of the various groups known? • Are all contradictions and internal inconsistencies identified? • Are the intersubjective understandings linked to the social conditions that maintain them? • Are the injured groups identified?
<i>Awareness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the social actors see their current situation accurately? • Are social actors aware of unrecognized social constraints and do they see how the conditions came to exist? • Is awareness achieved through dialogue? • Are the social actors involved? • Are new alternative courses of action presented? • Do social actors see themselves as capable of positive action? • Do the social actors choose their course of action?
<i>Praxis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the contradiction been resolved? • Are the participants' subjective images formed into objective structures? • Are social conditions changed to be less constraining? • Is the political action effective? • Is life made better? • Is some ongoing program initiated to continue the critical process?

Murray and Ozanne (1991, p. 139)

APPENDIX 4 COVERAGE AND CENTRALISATION OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The OECD defines the coverage of collective bargaining⁴² as ‘an indicator of the extent to which the terms of workers’ employment are influenced by collective negotiation ... [it is a] coverage rate [of] the number of employees covered by the collective agreement, divided by the total number of wage and salary-earners’. The coverage of collective agreements is often set by legislation and as such doesn’t correlate with union density; in fact, high coverage of collective agreements can discourage union membership, since benefits of collective bargaining can be gained without union membership.



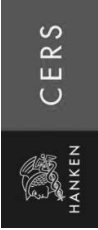
The level of centralisation refers to the level at which bargaining is conducted in the industrial relations system. The higher level agreements are benchmark agreements that set the agenda for lower level negotiations (in effect, national economy-wide agreements set the minimum standards). According to Visser (2015), collective bargaining coverage in Finland for 2014 was 93 per cent.

⁴² OECD Glossary of statistical terms: <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=3554>

APPENDIX 5 MEMBERSHIP VALUE IN MARKETING

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Relating to Relevance : Understanding Membership Value in Non-Profit Marketing

Background

Members' experiences are substantial concerns for membership-based NPOs yet often knowledge of the member is limited
Consequently membership management is often tactical communication-based and donor-oriented marketing¹ which often involves little interaction or encourages further participation on part of the member

Thus, there is a need for better understanding of why people participate, how they make sense of involvement² and what goals participation fulfils³

Aims and Objective

This research project examines the strategic fit of new marketing logics⁴ or value-based marketing for the non-profit context, especially for membership-based NPOs
This research aims for a twofold contribution by

- 1) *shifting the perspective to individual members as key stakeholders, and*
- 2) *conceptually and empirically analysing membership value in this context*

The question posed is *How can appreciation of value benefit marketing in the organisational context membership-based NPOs?*

Suggested findings

Creation of a value-based membership management framework portraying the experiences and contexts in which a membership is lived

The relationship between organisations and members is redefined based on knowledge of membership relevant activities, influences, networks etc.

Thereby augmenting marketing in NPOs from a function and communication activity to a comprehensive organisational practice based on and guided by member practices

Methodology

Empirical research is an extensive qualitative case study⁵ in the context of Finnish trade unions designed as follows

* currently underway

Conceptualising value in NPO context *



Management interviews explicate the current conduct of membership management contrasted with the practice of participation attained from an ethnographic approach

¹cf. Aikin, D. (2003). Nonprofit Marketing: Just How Far Has It Come? *Nonprofit World*, 9(10), 32-35; Brumm, L. & Brink, E. (2008). Rethinking marketing: Why relationship marketing works for not-for-profit organisations. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 13(4), 257-272; Dubler, S. & Laverack, K. (2009). Marketing, nonprofit organisations: an empirical investigation. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 87(1), 105-120; Hult, G. & Linstead, S. (2003). *Marketing Strategy for Voluntary Organisations: An Exploratory Study*. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*, 8(2), 84-94.

²cf. Dhillon, D. & Pong, M. (2006). *Small Moments, Big Revelations*. Seoul: O'Hara Chibok; Wiley.

³cf. Woodliff, R. & Carroll, S. F. (1999). *From Buyer-Customer, New Approaches to Understanding Customer Value and Satisfaction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
⁴ *marketing* will marketing, deemed to be a Vengon, A. L. (2007). *From Buyer-Customer, New Approaches to Understanding Customer Value and Satisfaction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
⁵cf. Hansen, K., Sørensen, T., Madsen, K., Børsting, K., Sørensen, E. & Sørensen, E. (2000). *Arbejdsmarkedet i Danmark*. *Journal of Strategic Management*, 23(4), 37-56.
⁶cf. Ebbesen, P. and Koldgaard, A. (2008). *Qualitative Methods in Business Research*. London: Sage.

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MIKKO LAAMANEN

THE POLITICS OF VALUE CREATION

The politics of value creation outlined in this dissertation challenges core assumptions of current value creation literature and particularly its service-dominant logic branch. Politics of value creation illustrates the weight that people individually and collectively give to an object or an issue; the social construction of meaning and valuation, its conventions and institutions; the authority afforded through these, and the struggle between different groups to maintain and change the above.

This study engages current theory with an alternative conceptual framework and an unorthodox empirical setting. Sociological theories of collective action and strategic action fields are in conceptual dialogue with value-creating actors, their relationships and interaction, practices and outcomes. The collective–conflictual value creation theory developed in this study acknowledges systems of domination and skewedness of power in value creating contexts. The approach builds on the bearing that dominant ideologies are a product of a particular social order and interests that result in a conflict between incumbents and challeng-

ers, and have consequences to the wider environment. Rather than marginal and consequential, conflict is not only endemic, but causative when value-creating interactions are based on varying understandings and logics. The empirical study engaged the organised labour in Finland with critical ethnography examining societal macro-relations of the labour market institutions, meso-dynamics of the labour movement, and micro-practices in a trade union organisation.

The politics of value creation is, on one hand, a critical analysis of current theory, and on the other, an exploratory study illustrating strategic collective action in value creation. With the collective–conflictual approach, value creation contexts are recast as porous arenas where various interactions, practice and outcomes constantly develop in collaboration and competition illustrating the permanence of dynamic tensions that instigate jockeying, using social skill in framing, and practicing ideologies and politics in an attempt to create and arbitrate value.



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