The role of agency in sociocultural evolution: Institutional entrepreneurship as a force of structural and cultural change

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Abstract

Inspired by Weber's charismatic carrier groups, Eisenstadt coined the term institutional entrepreneur to capture the rare but epochal collective capable of reorienting a group's value-orientations and transferring charisma, while making them an evolutionary force of structural and cultural change. As a corrective to Parsons' abstract, 'top-down' theory of change, Eisenstadt's theory provided historical context and agency to moments in which societies experienced qualitative transformation. The concept has become central to new institutionalism, neo-functionalism, and evolutionary-institutionalism. Drawing from the former two, a more robust theory of institutional entrepreneurship from an evolutionary-institutionalist's perspective is posited. In essence, entrepreneurs formulate institutional projects with dual logic: a collective side focused on innovation where efforts are directed towards organizational symbolic mechanisms of integration and a self-interested side directed towards resource independence, monopolization, mobility, and power-dependence. While outcomes vary based on numerous environmental factors, success leads to (1) greater structural/symbolic independence and (2) ability to reconfigure physical-temporal-social-symbolic space.

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Introduction

Central to Weber's theory of historical change were special corporate actors whose unique worldview could spread and be imposed on other segments of a population in ways that could reorient material/ideal interests and, like 'switchmen', change the trajectory of society. *Carrier groups*, as Weber referred to them, were not just instituting new cultural patterns; they were also reconfiguring the organizational and symbolic frames through which social action was possible. Recently, Weber's insights have been the foundation for theories that look to bridge the agency-structure divide by conceptualizing a special corporate actor potentially capable of creating and maintaining a 'legitimate vision of reality' that produces or reproduces social order (Eisenstadt, 1964, 1980; Colomy and Rhoades, 1994; Collins, 1998; Abrutyn, 2009, 2013a, 2014). In particular, S.N. Eisenstadt explicitly sought to link macro-institutional change – e.g. institutional differentiation – to the efforts of carrier groups, or what he termed *institutional entrepreneurs*. For Eisenstadt, entrepreneurs emerged in the face of a crisis generally related to an institutional domain(s) failure to continue to resolve certain problems or the pressure to integrate newly differentiated social units.

Historical or 'old' institutionalism (cf. Abrutyn and Turner, 2011), a tradition in which Eisenstadt worked, understood *institutions* as macro-structural/cultural systems (or milieu) in which action is facilitated through the acquisition and employment of value-orientations, goals, ideologies, and strategies. Thus, when the contradictions between an institutional sphere's structure/culture and a changing environment pressed against a group, entrepreneurs were more likely to emerge and respond to this crisis by positing new goals, emphasizing collective interests over self-interest, and actively delegitimizing old goals (Eisenstadt, 1971: 54–5). If one could speak of success in a measurable sense, it meant being able to convince other strata their solutions were 'rooted in the attempt to come into contact with the very essence of being, to go to the very roots of existence, of cosmic, social, and cultural order, to what is seen as sacred and fundamental' (in Weber, 1968: xix) such that they could routinize their solutions and 'impose' their value-orientations on a significant proportion of the population.

Eisenstadt's *institutional entrepreneurs* would eventually inform two different, yet related, strands of scholarship. Having been criticized for not having a theory of action or agency, new institutionalists began to search for some type of agent of change. Drawing from Eisenstadt, Paul DiMaggio (1988: 14) settled on institutional entrepreneurs, who he conceptualized as actors 'with sufficient resources who see in them an opportunity to realize an interest that they value highly' and, consequently, are potentially able to create new organizational forms. In recent years, this concept has come to be used by all sorts of new institutionalists as a catchall for organizational actors able to innovate organizationally (DiMaggio, 1991; Levy and Scully, 2007; Hardy and Maguire, 2008). The new institutionalists, however, diverged from Eisenstadt's (and Weber's) original intent in many ways. First, recent criticisms have asked how actors can be true agents of change

when new institutionalists see all action as deeply embedded in routine, taken-for-granted structures (Leca and Naccache, 2006) – or, what has been often labeled the 'abstract voluntarism of rational choice theory' (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). Moreover, a second paradox emerges when one considers the instrumentality of organizational actors somehow capable of seizing structural holes (Burt, 2004) – or, conversely, avoiding action when considered costly – and endlessly strategizing (e.g. Bourdieu, 1992), when in fact action is rare, often unintentional, and generally reproductive in outcome (Fligstein and McAdam, 2011). Third, new institutionalists have generally ignored power and conflict and see institutional or, more specifically, organizational change as linear and incremental (Colomy, 1998). Fourth, new institutionalists' entrepreneurs, when conceptualized as instrumental and strategic, lack any sense of moral or normative motives, begging the question of cynical rational-choice theory (Abrutyn, 2013b). Fifth, new institutionalist and Bourdieuian studies of entrepreneurs are ahistorical (Calhoun, 1993; Abrutyn and Turner, 2011) and tend to overstate the ubiquity of modern capitalist organizational forms.

The other strand is found in both neo-functionalism (Alexander and Colomy, 1985) and the modern version of 'historical' or 'old' institutionalism: *evolutionary-institutionalism* (Luhmann, 1982; Turner, 2003, 2010, 2011; Abrutyn, 2009, 2013b; Nolan and Lenski, 2009; Abrutyn and Turner, 2011; Richerson and Henrich, 2012). Neo-functionalists have traditionally looked to Durkheim and his overarching concern with differentiation and the subsequent mechanisms necessary or constructed to reduce conflict and tension between disparate social units – e.g. increasingly abstract and generalized value-orientations and moral codes (Alexander, 1988, 2011) – with the emphasis on the entrepreneurial projects aimed at criticizing extant goals and efforts as antithetical to the moral order, while promoting new collective goals and normative frames (Colomy, 1990a, 1990b, 1998; Colomy and Rhoades, 1994). Meanwhile, evolutionary-institutionalists have returned to the Weberian (1968) side of Eisenstadt and institutionalism, shifting the focus from collective goals and norms to power-dependency and the tenuous balance between collectivism and entrepreneurial interests (Abrutyn, 2009, 2013a). Despite these differences, both take integration as a crucial problem all social spheres must address, and both move far beyond the new institutionalist focus on entrepreneurs as economic actors inventing new organizational forms for better profit and efficiency. Rather, institutional entrepreneurs construct symbolic and normative frameworks – in addition to organizational ones – not solely out of self-interest, as their institutional projects would likely fail to enlist other strata and, thereby, acquire sufficient human and material resources to realize their goals. Further, evolutionary-institutionalists conceptualize entrepreneurs as the sociocultural analogy to biological mutations, as group-level selection often leads to their being in a position to qualitatively transform societal space by carving out autonomous institutional domains, or discrete physical, temporal, social, and symbolic spheres.

This paper contributes to both neo-functionalism and new institutionalism, but is firmly anchored in evolutionary-institutionalism. The latter, as opposed to new institutionalists, clearly delineates the macro-level (institutional spheres like kinship, economy, or religion) from the meso-level (organizations or fields) and micro-level (encounters). Institutional spheres are emergent structural and cultural milieu comprised of unique

properties and dynamics that are more than just 'vague' environments housing organizational units or clusters of organizations (cf. Turner, 2003, 2010; Scott, 2001). Moreover, evolutionary-institutionalism has an active body of scholarship interested in group selectionism, and thus seems apt for working out a cogent theory of entrepreneurship (Wilson, 2001; Turner and Maryanski, 2009; Abrutyn, 2009, 2013a, 2013c; Bowles and Gintis, 2011). The argument, then, rests on Weber's (1968, 1978) conception of macro-social orders like religion, polity, law, and economy being social spheres, while entrepreneurship can range from the types of transformative political projects that result in political autonomy (Eisenstadt, 1963) or legal projects ending in legal autonomy (Abrutyn, 2009) to the political entrepreneurship of antebellum political parties in the framing of what they perceived as a crisis and offering organizational/normative solutions (Colomy, 1990b).

A descriptive theory of entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurs, institutional projects, and autonomy

What is an entrepreneur?. For Eisenstadt (1964, 1980), the term institutional entrepreneur was somewhat synonymous with Weber's charismatic leader: single individuals who were potentially able to change structure by way of securing authority rooted in some personal qualities. Eisenstadt considered entrepreneurs the generative force behind carrier groups in that they may (a) shift the 'global' worldview held by those around them, (b) supplement established group goals with new goals, (c) push collective goals above self-interested goals held by individual members, and/or (d) delegitimize certain extant individual and/or collective goals (1971: 54–5). Ultimately, Eisenstadt's model is premised on the efforts of a charismatic leader successfully reshaping the worldviews of existing or emerging sets of elites and, subsequently, imposing what Bourdieu (1977) would refer to as a 'legitimate vision of reality' on other strata. Most importantly, entrepreneurs were the force behind the 'crystallization, continuity, and change of major types of institutions, cultural symbols, and macrosocietal settings' and who were the principal dynamic behind the transformation of 'existing institutional and cultural complexes . . . [by] building new ones' (Eisenstadt in Weber, 1968: xvi).

Drawing a clear distinction between entrepreneurs and other types of groups, Colomy noted that (a) they were firmly committed to a project that becomes the defining feature of the group's *ethos*; (b) the project was often focused on reconfiguring symbolic and organizational space; and (c) a central component of any project was a concerted effort to 'articulate and legitimate their proposals for structural change . . . while simultaneously challenging and critiquing existing arrangements' (1998: 271). Consequently, successful projects carved out space between [themselves and other] entrepreneurs as well as the macro-institutional spaces that previously constrained them. The size of this free space is dependent, in part, on how new the innovations are, how convincing the framing proves, and the amount of solidarity entrepreneurs are able to generate within the group and among new members (1990a, 1990b). Colomy also brought to the fore the tenuous nature of entrepreneurship: projects were often contested by elites or countermovements and differentiation was often incomplete or uneven as projects rarely ended the way they

were initially intended. Indeed, the shift in project goals and strategies often reflected the fact that legitimation and access to resources were variable and not given, as well as the possibility of elites co-opting the project as their own.

Other scholars in this area represent a slightly different yet compatible take on entrepreneurship. Turning back to Weber's (1946a: 280–1) 'switchman' metaphor, entrepreneurs can be conceptualized as one key force in the reconfiguration of macro-level social orders, or institutional domains.[1] Evolutionary-institutionalists conceptualize institutional spheres as structural cultural systems that facilitate and constrain action (Turner, 2003, 2010; Abrutyn, 2009, 2013b; Richerson and Henrich, 2012). Entrepreneurs are the active producers and reproducers of institutions – that is, they are the source and enemy of creativity within institutional domains. This view complements Colomy's in that it emphasizes the self-interestedness of entrepreneurship, both in the name of self-preservation and through the realization that mobility and privilege can be obtained by monopolizing their knowledge and practices, drawing legitimacy from above and below, and securing adequate resource bases (cf. Bourdieu, 1977).

More importantly, evolutionary-institutionalism tends to be interested in the qualitative transformations wrought by institutional entrepreneurship: e.g. the construction of autonomous institutional spheres constituted by discrete physical, temporal, social, and symbolic space. Again, this tradition emphasizes different, yet complementary, aspects of entrepreneurship from Colomy's work. There is a tendency, for example, to consider the side of projects that pursue structural/symbolic independence, power-dependence, and prestige (see also Lenski, 1966; Rueschemeyer, 1977). 'Success', then, means carving out autonomous space that affords entrepreneurs the ability to institutionalize their worldview and reorient other actors' interests, goals, and values. Projects, then, are tenuously balanced by collective-orientations and self-interest with the most successful entrepreneurs being those most effective at promoting the former and concealing the latter; an insight derived from Bourdieu's (1977) strategies of *condescension* and *misrecognition*.

The intersection between these two strands always meets at the problems Eisenstadt identified with differentiation and entrepreneurial efforts to resolve or, at least, keep at bay these problems. Eisenstadt (1987) long contended that integration (trust and commitment), legitimation (a sense of shared reality/meaning), and regulation (control and coordination) are overwhelmingly salient pressures that are associated with differentiation; as institutional spheres become increasingly discrete milieu, entrepreneurs must find solutions to these problems or risk the continued flow of resources to the center and their ability to realize their interests. For Colomy, entrepreneurs are situated in Durkheimian solutions that generally include abstraction of norms and values, or in Eisenstadt's (1971) language, the elevation of the collective and its goals over the individual. On the other hand, Abrutyn has embraced Weberian solutions to these problems that include the legitimation of self-interested goals as collectively-oriented, the institutionalization of charisma as a force of traditional and taken-for-granted regulation, and the integration of intra-institutional social units through autonomy. Through the process of autonomy distinctive set of symbols are created, especially *generalized symbolic media of exchange and communication*, which produce cultural equivalencies even in the face of massive structural inequalities (Abrutyn, 2013b).[2]

Institutional entrepreneurs and their projects

Thus, institutional projects have a dual logic. On the one hand, entrepreneurs pursue institutional projects that 'seek to crystallize broad symbolic orientations in new ways, articulate specific goals, and construct normative and organizational frameworks to pursue [entrepreneurial] ends' (Colomy and Rhoades, 1994: 554). On the other hand, entrepreneurs purposefully strive to monopolize key material and symbolic resources, secure legitimacy from elites and other strata, find independent bases of resources, and struggle for power-dependency and power-sharing relationships (Abrutyn, 2009: 455–7). At times, these two different logics, one collectively-oriented and the other self-interested, may be complementary, while at other times they may be contradictory to each other. Typically, entrepreneurs push collective goals over self-interested ones (Colomy, 1998: 272) and, in most cases, the projects become the *raison d'être* for the group's existence, which feeds back and shapes the meanings its members use to orient their actions and attitudes. Colomy stresses the authentic belief entrepreneurs often express regarding the rightness of their solutions and the wrongness of others; it is this belief that generates solidarity among members and draws new followers. Yet, even the best-intentioned entrepreneurs recognize the need for resources, and this need can supplant the collective-orientation, especially when faced with resistance from existing elites and when resource flows become a salient condition for success. Project means and goals can become distorted or altered when resources become problematic and the primary focus of the group. To be sure, it matters more that entrepreneurs 'frame' their projects in collective terms in order to garner support in the effort to combat existing worldviews (Benford and Snow, 2000), even if this articulation is propaganda (Ellul, 1973).

Because entrepreneurs are not always upstarts challenging the status quo, projects may also be devised that are either directed towards reintegrating (that is re-adapting) newly differentiated social units or sustaining and, sometimes, expanding the group's resources and privilege. Rueschemeyer (1977) underscores the fact that, once differentiated, political entrepreneurs must adjust to changing internal and external forces and, typically, this means organizational innovation such as internal differentiation of bureaucratic units. This innovation may be motivated by the desire to deliver services more efficaciously or it may be a cunning strategy to enhance their grip over power. Either way, their project is undergirded by both logics, even if the primary motivation varies; indeed, variation in motives can be a reason for variation in projects, entrepreneurs, and outcomes.

Besides these two logics, every project is defined by the relative importance of four pragmatic goals. First, entrepreneurs are focused on resolving problems they see as pressing by innovating organizationally, symbolically, and normatively. The motivation to innovate varies depending on the entrepreneur's social position, the phase of the project, and other sociocultural/environmental conditions – e.g. innovation may be directed towards some exigency or crisis, in response to the reaction of competitors or elites, to integrate new members or constituencies, and so on. Second, entrepreneurs must also convince other strata, both extant elites and, more importantly, significant proportions of the population, that their innovations are better than existing alternatives.

Social movement scholars refer to this as *framing* 'an event, social condition, or aspect of life . . . [via] the attribution of blame or responsibility for the problematized conditions' (Snow and Soule, 2010: 51–2). Third, all groups looking to stabilize (or enhance) their position, while also generating solidarity and commitment among members, pursue monopolies over the fundamental elements that make them a group in the first place. In particular, monopolizing knowledge and practices – as well as their further development, application, and transmission – helps build boundaries and positive affect, stabilize resource flows, and make the group more indispensable. The pursuit of these three goals is directly related to the fourth: the attempt to strike power-sharing agreements with elites and efforts to leverage power-dependency with alternative bases of resources. The former is important as it provides legitimacy from above, reduces immediate threats, and can eliminate competition; the latter protects entrepreneurs from being stuck in patron-client dependent relations with existing elites and can help 'force' tenuous power-sharing agreements as extant elites recognize it is in their interest to cooperate rather than 'crush' upstarts. Projects vary in terms of which goal or goals are most prominent, yet every project is rooted in all four; predictably, the phase of a project and the reaction from other strata may lead goals to change in terms of their import.

Project outcomes and institutional autonomy

Institutional entrepreneurs are institution-builders, but what does it mean to 'build' institutions? For the old functionalists, it meant differentiating institutional domains from each other (Parsons and Smelser, 1956; Luhmann, 1982). While differentiation refers to the creation of increasingly distinct social units, differentiation produces distinctions only on the surface – e.g. Mesopotamian priests were priests in name and outfit, but their efforts and orientations served the king first and then some deity second (Machinist, 1986), whereas institutional autonomy is the process by which institutional entrepreneurs struggle to secure structural and symbolic independence. Compare, then, the Mesopotamian priests to the post-Exilic Israelite priests during the latter half of the 6th century BCE: the Israelites had managed to make autonomous the religious sphere and thus their activities in ways that forced the political elite to share power (Abrutyn, 2014, 2015a, 2015b). In essence, they reconfigured the Israelite society's space. Consider, as two contrasting contemporary examples, American medical entrepreneurs and Soviet Union lawyers. The former created a collective, struggled against competitors, secured the legitimate right to control the profession as backed by the state and, eventually, monopolized *health care* such that most Americans would not think of using 'grandma's home remedy' over prescribed medicine (Starr, 1982) – a qualitative change, incidentally, that continues to be relevant to the phenomenology of health care in the US despite the erosion of medical entrepreneurs' independence. In contrast, the Soviet legal profession was never geared towards entrepreneurship, as Berman (1968) demonstrates their actions, goals, and motives were shaped by *power* and *party loyalty* first, and then norms and principles of *justice* second.

  Hence, autonomy means institutional entrepreneurs develop and institutionalize discrete cultural and structural mechanisms that share some common elements from other domains, but are physically, temporally, socially, and symbolically distinguishable.[3] In

other words, autonomous institutional domains impose a worldview on institutional actors and those non-institutional actors seeking the resources monopolized by entrepreneurs. Cultural systems include value-orientations, goals, ideologies, and norms, as well as a currency or generalized symbolic medium of exchange/communication, while structural systems consist of the types and combinations of integrative mechanisms as well as the stratification system. Accordingly, Colomy and Rhoades' (1994: 554) entrepreneurs erect organizational/normative frameworks to crystallize the changes they enact, while it can be added that these frameworks become the tools to greater independence vis-à-vis other social units. Independence contributes to an entrepreneur's ability to reconfigure physical, temporal, social, and symbolic space and, ultimately, carve out autonomous institutional space.

In more concrete terms, entrepreneurs erect monuments, 'colonize' buildings, and demarcate geographic zones like 'residential' districts, cities (e.g. Jerusalem, Salt Lake City for Mormons, or Washington, DC, as a 'sacred' political space), and broad regions (e.g. 'western Christendom' or the Middle East as an 'Islamic' space). They also differentiate the appropriate times to enter these physical spaces, pursue goods/services offered by entrepreneurs, or activate roles unique to the institutional domain. Additionally, entrepreneurs are responsible for creating generalized roles with basic membership criteria and relatively generalized expectations and obligations like 'consumer', 'patient' or 'fan'. Finally, entrepreneurs seek to install their vision of reality by saturating the aforementioned spaces in the symbolic elements found in the domain: the architecture of buildings becomes synonymous with its institutional entrepreneur's activities and acts as cues for cognitive orientation; monuments represent cherished ideals by inscribing history into the landscape; uniforms and emblems differentiate actors and organizations from each other; and roles become symbolically meaningful things – the space becomes *thematicized*, in Luhmann's (1982, 2012) terms, or iconographic, in Alexander's (2010). By carving out these four dimensions of space, entrepreneurs are better able to impose lines of action, goals, values, and ideologies as taken-for-granted culture. Essentially, autonomous institutions provide entrepreneurs with the space to begin and complete projects, to resolve collective problems, and to realize self-interest. The earliest political entrepreneurs, for instance, carved out (relatively) autonomous polities in which the 'formation, pursuit, and implementation' of political goals became 'largely independent of other groups, and . . . governed mostly by political criteria and by consideration of political exigency' (Eisenstadt, 1963: 19; cf. Abrutyn, 2013c). Entrepreneurs build autonomous institutions, then, not by making them 'different' in structure and function, but by *qualitatively transforming* these four dimensions of space in ways that make them physically and cognitively discrete vis-à-vis other institutional domains.

An important qualification should be noted: entrepreneurial projects do not always result in highly autonomous institutional domains, but may result in unevenly differentiated (Colomy, 1990b) or partially autonomous domains (Abrutyn, 2009). First, the goals of the project may not be transformational at the onset or, because of structural conditions such as the degree to which power and resources are centralized and consolidated, goals may be compromised and partial success may be deemed success. Second, structural opportunities may be limited by the number of competitors and their

relative access to resources (Collins, 1998; Burt, 2004). Third, countermovements may usurp the goals of entrepreneurs, resulting in unpredictable outcomes (Colomy, 1998). Fourth, and finally, a project may be aimed not at expanding autonomy but contracting other institutional entrepreneurs' autonomy in hopes of de-differentiating organizational and role boundaries (Rueschemeyer, 1977).

In sum, institutional entrepreneurs are defined as bounded corporate units who (1) perceive real or imagined crises, (2) pursue institutional projects that include (a) symbolic, organizational, and technological innovation meant to resolve the crisis, (b) efforts to articulate and frame their solutions vis-à-vis existing solutions, (c) the pursuit of monopolies over innovations and goods/services that make them unique and, possibly, indispensable, and (d) leveraging power-dependent and power-sharing relationships with various strata, which (3) results in some degree of structural and symbolic independence and, thereby, varying abilities and motivation to reconfigure the physical, temporal, social, and symbolic macro-level of social reality. We turn now from description to positing an explanatory theory.

Towards an explanatory theory of institutional entrepreneurship

The underlying engine

The gap between the macro-level of social reality and the micro/meso-level is complicated. For Eisenstadt, the motivation for pursuing institutional change came from the perception of a real or imagined crisis (see introduction in Weber, 1968). Implicitly, crises must have some basis in empirical reality, which is why the engine of entrepreneurship begins on the macro-level where endogenous and exogenous exigencies emerge. That being said, it is important to keep in mind the loose coupling between actual exigencies and the projects themselves; in many cases, entrepreneurs are unable to perceive – for various reasons – the source or actual exigency, but feel pressures coming from somewhere; other times, entrepreneurs are motivated to 'invent' or perceive exigencies that may or may not actually be there, and thus, projects are not always as closely linked to exigencies and, because of this, do not always resolve them. This is because identifying the source of a real crisis is rare: people are less likely to perceive population pressures than a threat to, or decline in, their standard of living. What matters, of course, is that entrepreneurs articulate their solutions as superior and other strata believe these solutions work. Nevertheless, there are four key forces driving entrepreneurship: *exigencies*, *selection pressures*, *efficacy of extant solutions* and *the probability that a person or group would identify and label a crisis as pressing*. Figure 1 visualizes the feedback loop relationship between the first three concepts as well as how they are related to the fourth.

Exigencies. Exigencies are macro-level dynamics that present potential problems for societies or segments of a society. Exogenous exigencies are often natural, such as earthquakes or droughts, but can be sociocultural, such as a threatening neighbor pushing against a group and its resource niche. Rarely are exogenous exigencies separate from their endogenous counterparts: droughts lead to the decline in resource productivity,
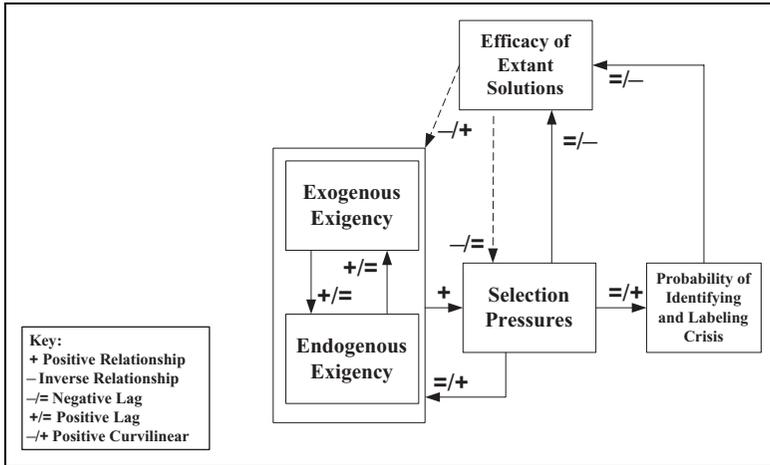
Figure 1. The basic engine of entrepreneurship.

which often leads to the radical redistribution of resources, intensifying internal conflict along class or other categoric distinctions, and, sometimes, greater centralization and consolidation of resources which only intensifies the conflicts and redistributive effects (Turner, 2003; Abrutyn and Lawrence, 2010). Again, entrepreneurs may or may not be successful in 'objectively' identifying exigencies; societies often collapse because groups either failed to perceive any pressure at all or misidentified the pressure so badly that their efforts were in vain. Hence, many projects begin when individuals or groups perceive some problem to be real and attempt to resolve the problem. Exigencies are the engine, ultimately, because they create the conditions for innovation and action even if the conditions are not sufficient to cause entrepreneurial activities.

Selection pressures. Selection pressures are pressures for adaptive, innovative responses on the part of some corporate actors and their constituent members (Turner and Maryanski, 2008, 2009). Depending on the source of selection, these pressures can drive different types of responses. Exogenous exigencies typically condition Spencerian selection, or pressures for creating new structural and/or cultural solutions meant to adapt or re-adapt the social unit. Spencerian selection often results in newly differentiated roles or organizations within an institution, greater autonomy for an institution, or an entirely new institutional domain. Endogenous exigencies typically generate Durkheimian selection, or pressures arising from competition over scarce resources within a single institutional domain or a niche within that domain. Entrepreneurship in the Durkheimian case looks a lot more like the entrepreneurship of the new institutionalists who are interested in organizational fields (DiMaggio, 1988) and population ecology (Aldrich and Ruef, 2006: 16–33), as well as the dynamics of heterodoxies in which opposed groups compete for resources like attention (Collins, 1988), which also serve as selection pressures (Collins, 1998; Eisenstadt, 1980). In the former type of

selection, change is far more qualitative while in the latter it is generally quantitative (see Abrutyn and Lawrence, 2010, for a review of qualitative and quantitative change), resulting in more niches or greater carrying capacity (or fewer organizations). For instance, in Collins' (1998) analysis of the 'evolution' of philosophies, we can trace the gradual growth of ideas over generations as the number of adherents grows concomitantly. A threshold, however, is typically reached when some ideas and their entrepreneurs 'succeed' over their rivals; the succeeding entrepreneurs, then, are able to alter the structural and cultural space of an institution (Eisenstadt, 1980). To be sure, the two types of selection often arise sequentially, and can operate together. Ultimately, selection pressures left unattended will eventually amplify the exigencies or create new ones that feedback and intensify the pressures for innovation.

Extant solutions' efficacy. A key reason entrepreneurs appear in the first place is because of existing solutions and their real or perceived lack of efficacy. Where solutions fail, pressure for innovation grows; where solutions are perceived to be 'evil, inequitable . . . and fundamentally unjust' (Colomy, 1998: 272), motivation for innovation is amplified. New solutions may actually be new combinations of old ones, revisiting discarded ones, or somewhat novel. In many cases, previous efforts serve as blueprints for solving new problems (cf. Coser, 1974; Ertman, 1997). If, for example, a neighbor begins to make hostile overtures and they happen to have iron weapons, there would be an intense pressure for innovative weaponry on the part of the threatened group, as well as new organizational strategies that centralize decision-making. Yet, the lack of metallurgical knowledge and/or the raw materials may be a constraint on innovation, as are existing kinship organizational arrangements that may hinder the consolidation of power. The same contests over resources can be seen in the struggle between religious and scientific entrepreneurs that has been waged in the US since, at least, the 19th century (cf. Marsden, 1980). Scientific entrepreneurs managed, through objective technical successes, to monopolize the rights to *truth* and *applied knowledge* – or, cosmological resources – vis-à-vis their religious counterparts who had dominated the production and distribution of these resources for a millennium (Abrutyn, 2013b). The struggle for human and material resources is at the center of the so-called 'culture wars' that feature Enlightenment arguments versus theological and biblically grounded beliefs (Layman, 2001; Brint and Abrutyn, 2009). Moreover, existing solutions are only effective for so long and, over time, it is very likely that existing solutions will eventually lose their efficacy and exacerbate old, or create new, problems. It is also possible that nascent entrepreneurs will call into question the utility of old solutions regardless of the validity of their claims (Colomy and Rhoades, 1994: 556). Entrepreneurs must be talented both in the art of framing as well as in wielding Bourdieuian (1977: 182–92) strategies of misrecognition that hide their self-interest and, in turn, promote their concerns for the greater good.[4]

Thus, when a group or person identifies and labels a crisis, and believes the existing solutions lack efficacy, they will likely begin to innovate. To be sure, the degree to which these innovations are novel depends on the existing solutions, the availability of free-flowing resources, and, of course, the degree to which the aspiring entrepreneurs perceive opportunities for innovation. In particular, these groups pursue organizational,

symbolic, and technological innovations; the primacy of any one innovational type is dependent on empirical conditions such as the perceived crisis, the material, human, and symbolic resources available, and the group's position and function. Organizational innovations touch on creating new forms, whether they be horizontal divisions of labor, vertical hierarchies of authority, or an amalgam of the two; symbolic innovations include new worldviews, material/ideal interests, value-orientations, ideologies, and goals; normative innovations revolve around new socioemotional anchorages and frames, moral imperatives and obligations, and some link to a sacred authority. Though analytically distinct, all forms of innovations are inextricably linked – e.g., new organizational forms require new symbolic elements to explain, justify, legitimate, and regulate the organization while, conversely, new symbolic elements often reconfigure the relationships between roles or groups.

In addition, success also widens the structural opportunities as groups gain credibility and a sense of inevitability (Burt, 2004). Initial and continued success has the further consequence of making the project the central component to the *ethos* of the group's identity, as well as each member's role-identity – that is, it becomes a source of solidarity, enters into the vocabulary of motives members carry with them, and contributes to the charisma of the group. Over time, success becomes a variable with which entrepreneurs can secure legitimacy from existing elites. Of course, failure is also an option. In some cases, failure intensifies the exigencies and selection pressures leading to the eventual disintegration or collapse of society. Other times, as Colomy (1998) argues, failure may very well lead to success. Counter-movements are often the reason for the initial failure as existing elites try to prevent upstarts and challenges to their legitimacy; in the process of doing so, they often purposively or accidentally co-opt or assimilate some of the innovations as their own to reduce the claims of the upstarts. As such, they unwittingly become entrepreneurs. The unintended consequences may give the weakened aspiring entrepreneurs new hope, or it may encourage new entrepreneurs to take their place and use the changed conditions to their advantage.

The mediating factors: Existing power structures. In Figure 2, we present the entire model explaining the emergence of entrepreneurs. One of the most important conditions affecting the process is the degree to which power and resource flows are consolidated and centralized. Lenski's (1966: 45–6) *Power and Privilege* states that power will determine the distribution of the surplus produced by a group and, thus, the degree to which the flow of resources is tightly regulated affects both the opportunities for entrepreneurship as well as the ability to innovate. While power differentials may prevent new entrepreneurs from appearing, it can create the conditions for which old entrepreneurs formulate new projects. Those in power often innovate organizationally to maintain and expand the base of power, exercise differential advantages, and realize positional interests (Rueschemeyer, 1977). Differentiating an already autonomous polity, for instance, allows political elite to penetrate the lives of people more effectively, while also intensifying the dependence other strata have on the polity. And while political entrepreneurs may be seeking greater power, it is often the opposite that occurs. For one thing, differentiation of new special organizational units charged with resolving problems may lead to power-sharing founded on the indispensability of the new unit.

Figure 2. The basic engine of entrepreneurship.

Secondly, as this new unit recognizes its own interests it may begin to work towards greater independence and, ultimately, may become a powerful force of change. Eisenstadt (1963), for instance, points to the growing problems kings had with controlling priests who were initially bureaucratic scribes (Oppenheim, 1975), but (in nearly every case) became a competitor for resources and an entrepreneur in pursuit of religious autonomy. We see the same competition between religious and scientific entrepreneurs in modernity, as described above. But, several other examples can be briefly delineated. Howard Becker's (1963) oft-forgotten discussion of jazz musicians struggling between making music for the sake of *beauty* and *aesthetics* or being co-opted by the economic sphere, making a living, and 'selling out', remains relevant today where commodification of 'pop' music and the cult of the personality compete against artistry. The same type of dilemma is discussed by Arlie Hochschild (2013) on the 'outsourcing' of kinship obligations to non-kin service workers (e.g. maids), and emotional and phenomenological implications for the family members. Third, suppressing innovation can lead to exigencies growing in magnitude such that entrepreneurship is necessary if the society is to continue to exist, while also creating the conditions for radical innovation as entrepreneurs try to pry open structural opportunities. Again, this does not mean entrepreneurs will or won't appear; it simply means power differentials are a causal mechanism in their own right.

Structural opportunities. Historical sociologists generally consider agency facilitated or constrained by contingencies called *structural opportunities*, or better understood as broader factors that 'conspire' to inhibit or encourage innovation, as well as the pursuit of monopolies, and the leveraging of power-dependence by restricting or freeing up necessary resources (Collins, 1998: 37–40). Referring to these opportunities as *holes*, Burt (2004: 354) considers these gaps or spaces in structure as central to the development and nurturing of ideas because groups able to exploit these holes 'are able to see early, see more broadly, and translate information across groups'. Burt's conceptual framework further underscores the dual-logic that projects as holes afford groups the opportunity to pursue and realize their interests while also making their innovations more diffuse across a broader swath of the population and improving their standards of living. Specifically, entrepreneurs who find and exploit structural holes are in a better position to (1) become 'aware of [the] *interests and difficulties* in other group[s]', (2) evaluate 'a belief or value in one group ... [and] translate [it] into language digestible' to other groups, (3) generate increasingly universal and generalizable symbolic frameworks that integrate greater numbers of seemingly disparate groups, and (4) 'synthesize the beliefs and practices of two or more groups' (2004: 355). Ultimately, structural opportunities, or holes, facilitate the formulation of institutional projects and the realization of institutional goals. The size and number of holes is clearly a product of the degree to which power and resources are centralized in addition to the relative intensity of selection pressures that contribute to producing vague feelings of malaise or unease and, thereby, increase the pool of potential new members.

Though beyond the scope of this paper, it seems plausible to suggest that there may be different types of holes leading to different types of entrepreneurs and, likewise, different types of projects. For instance, some holes emerge within or near the centers of

institutional domains, some on the margins, and others in the intersection or overlap of relatively autonomous domains. The former are likely exploited by existing entrepreneurs or what DiMaggio (1988) referred to as 'subsidiary' groups who are likely reacting to changes in the environment or exigencies arising within the domain, or are attempting to expand their influence. Within the margins, subsidiary groups are likely to be upstarts attempting to become entrepreneurs or are existing entrepreneurs attempting to gain mobility; their innovations may be more radical in challenging the status quo by encouraging the development of an oppositional consciousness (Mansbridge, 2001; Summers-Effler, 2002) and oppositional capital (Wieloch, 2002) amongst the oppressed. Clearly the locational differences will condition different projects and underline different goals. Groups on the margins are often the most radical innovators of all because they have far less to lose and far more to gain (Snow and Soule, 2010) and as such are more likely to develop radical frames geared towards extensive change (Ferree, 2003) – e.g., the Israelite prophets were on the margins of both the political and religious institutional centers (Hayes and Miller, 1977), as were the non-Catholic religious groups in the former Soviet Union (Froese, 2009), and both were quite radical in part because of their ability to escape monitoring. Furthermore, they are often far enough away from the center that the costs of monitoring and sanctioning lead to inconsistent reactions from the center until it is too late; and, when reactions from the center do come in the form of suppression or counter-movements, it either results in total destruction of the upstart, accommodation as the upstart may engender greater sympathy through grassroots efforts, or usurpation and co-optation of the upstart. Importantly, Colomy (1998) demonstrates that by usurping the project of an entrepreneur, counter-movements, unintentionally, contribute to the completion of the project directly or indirectly by opening up structural holes for future aspiring entrepreneurs.

Perhaps the most interesting space for entrepreneurial development is the interstices between domains. One could refer to these groups as 'liaisons' as they typically are embedded in one institutional domain, but act as gatekeepers or liaisons for actors in both domains; as such, they are the most typical historical source of new autonomous institutional domains. By the 12th and 13th centuries, a large proportion of second-born sons, dispossessed of land due to primogeniture, had taken advantage of the growing university system and became a significantly large legal entrepreneurial class (Rashdall, 1936). Their advantages first came from decisions made by Pope Gregory VII (c.1075), in which he chose to define the jurisdiction of the Church and fight his battles through Canon law, as opposed to raising an army. This decision had several unintended consequences: the legal class grew to the point that European kings, manorial lords, and urban merchants saw the need for and benefit of law as a means of competing against each other (Berman, 1983); and the Church was far more efficacious in penetrating the everyday lives of the Germanic and Anglo peoples by controlling personal status issues like marriage and adoption (Gies and Gies, 1986). In essence, legal entrepreneurs were in a position to foster greater awareness 'of [the] *interests and difficulties*' of these groups (Burt, 2004: 355), 'translate' the problems of one group into a legal language and the resolution from a legal language into an understandable language, and thus generate a more universal mechanism of integration (cf. Unger, 1976; Berman, 1983; Abrutyn, 2009). In essence, they could force extant elites to become dependent upon their services
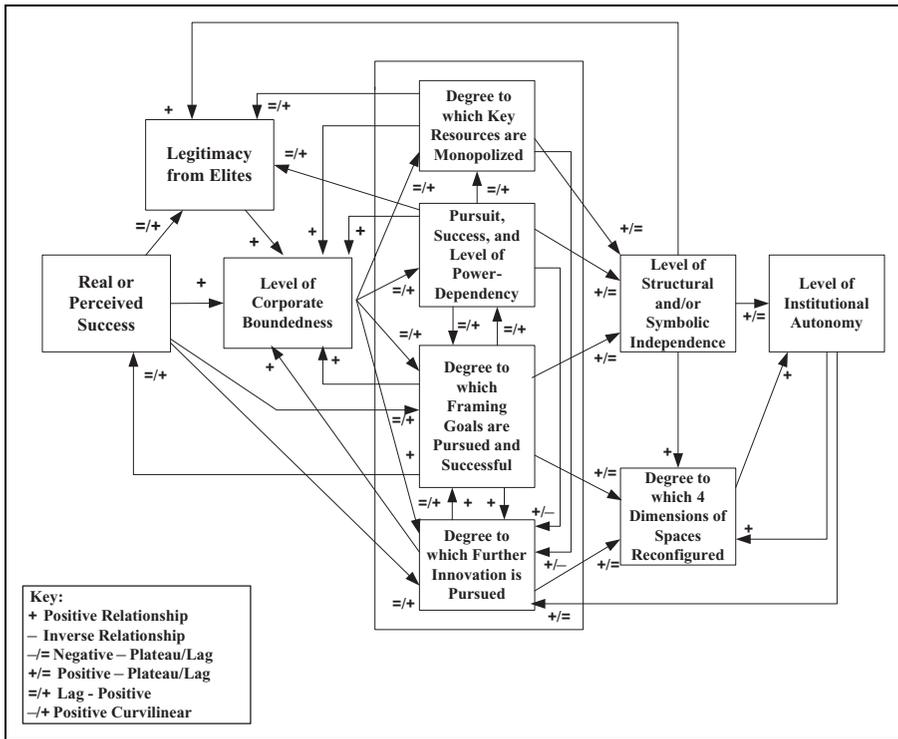
Figure 3. Institutional projects, institutional entrepreneurs.

to leverage greater independence (Rueschemeyer, 1977) and, eventually, carve out an autonomous legal domain.

Entrepreneurial project, Redux

In Figure 3, a model of entrepreneurial projects is presented that includes the four goals of projects discussed above and the outcomes. The goal of this section is to build on the discussion in the descriptive section above by further elucidating the relational links between project goals, independence, and structural/cultural change.

Project goals. If the engine of initial entrepreneurship is exigencies and selection pressures; the engine for concerted project formation derives from initial real/perceived success, the credibility garnered from elites, and the intensification of corporate boundedness. Success provides the rewards and motivation for further innovative efforts, the development of successful innovations, and the desire to 'frame' their solutions vis-à-vis existing elites. Moreover, success and legitimacy from the elite helps entrepreneurs demarcate their boundaries, while the pursuit of projects becomes the underlying *ethos* of the group. As Figure 3 illustrates, projects include all four goals; despite the organization of the four boxes vertically, the primacy of any given goal in relation to the

others is an historical question which can only be determined through empirical investigation.

In terms of the internal logic of the project, there are a series of relationships between the goals that reflect their interrelatedness. For instance, while monopolizing knowledge and practices is a goal in its own right, it becomes intensified when entrepreneurs also look to create power-sharing/power-dependent relations. In addition, both the struggle for monopolies and the effort to reconfigure power relations generates the drive for further innovation. Innovation serves as a means of enticing new members, adapting to the reactions of elites or other strata, producing greater group solidarity by increasing the prestige and value of membership, and creating greater social control within the entrepreneurial unit. However, a threshold is typically reached in terms of securing monopolies and power-dependent advantages that reflect the institutional inertia that arises from elites who are comfortable, work to sustain the status quo and protect their power and privilege, and who suppress innovations, as they may be threats. Framing is a goal in itself as well, but it is also a positive function of success, further innovation, and the pursuit of power-sharing/power-dependent relations. Indeed, it often locks into a feedback relationship with both the search for power-dependence and further innovation as entrepreneurs look to convince ever greater numbers of people and groups that their solutions are superior and that they are the only source of these solutions, and thus their strategies of framing become innovative symbolically and sometimes organizationally. Incidentally, certain goals likely feed back on the engine of project development. For instance, successful framing increases the degree to which the entrepreneur's innovations are perceived as successful, which further intensifies the boundaries of the group and encourages greater innovation; or, monopolization and power-dependency tend to pressure elites into providing greater legitimacy and accepting power-sharing relationships.

The thing to keep in mind is that these models are measured in *degree* and not *kind*. This means that the amount of effort and success in articulating entrepreneurial goals is an empirical question which has direct bearing on the degree to which a group gains structural and symbolic independence. In other words entrepreneurs do not always pursue projects that are aimed at or result in fully differentiated institutional domains. Above, it was posited that some projects are intra-institutional in that they are a reaction to changes in the institution's environment or to changes within the institution and, thus, are efforts to adapt to these changes and are not oriented to radically reconfigure the social world.

Independence, qualitative transformation, and institutional autonomy. The degree to which an entrepreneur has attained structural/symbolic independence is a positive function of the degree to which they have (1) monopolized key material, human, and symbolic resources, (2) pursued and successfully secured power-dependency, and (3) pursued and successfully articulated and framed their group's efforts as legitimate and others as illegitimate. Structural and symbolic independence, then, is really a product of having a secure base of resources to sustain (and often expand) entrepreneurial activities, a monopoly over the production and distribution of goods and services other groups desire and consider to be the sole or most legitimate source, and a well-articulated vision of reality that others adopt as they pursue, obtain, and use these resources.

As entrepreneurs become increasingly independent, entrepreneurs add to their projects the task of erecting 'their own system of authority and status hierarchy, as well as institute some mechanisms of control' (Abrutyn, 2009: 456). That is, they work to reconfigure the space in which they act, develop new innovations, transmit their knowledge to neophytes, and protect their privileges and position. Some of these changes are simply consequences of the project itself, while others are conscious efforts to alter the social landscape. For instance, in Joyce's discussion of the earliest forms of political entrepreneurship she remarked, ' By creating different kinds of *space* within [physical] sites, the continuing elaboration of monumental architecture served to *create spatial arenas with restricted access* . . . [such that] the patterns of habitual movement of all inhabitants of the site' were permanently altered (Joyce, 2000: 70–2, emphasis added). Reconfiguring space is not a strategy limited to ancient states, but rather a common strategy of most polities (Scott, 1998) – e.g. the invention of a new US capitol in Washington, DC, instead of Philadelphia involved the draining of a swamp and then the gradual erection of massive monuments and a 'national mall'.

Physical reconfiguration is always linked to symbolic reconfiguration as it makes what is physically real, cognitively portable (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]) – e.g. the construction of Buddhist monasteries in China during the 10th and 11th centuries followed the custom of constructing a square to represent the eight directions and the center as sacred; the layout always followed the logic of north to south (Walsh, 2009). Of course, we see this type of logic in architecture today, where every synagogue or mosque built in the US is designed such that the congregants pray facing Jerusalem and Mecca. Hence, entrepreneurs saturate the space with symbols and through public/private rituals these symbols, activities, spaces, and actors become imbued with meanings that fuel a sense of righteousness and morality in group membership (Collins, 2004). Additionally, physical differentiation is nearly always coupled with temporal differentiation as well: the use of physical space, the activation of roles, and the duration with which performances last is governed by entrepreneurial orientations institutionalized into the structure and culture (Goffman, 1967; Alexander, 2004); like physical space, temporal differentiation is often drenched in the symbolic essence of the domain, often lending a sacred or normativity to exchanges like entrance/exit rituals (Eliade, 1959). Social relationships and the roles that facilitate exchanges also are differentiated and become deeply entwined in the physical, temporal, and symbolic dimensions of institutional domains. Generalized roles and counter-roles generate relatively stereotyped behavioral patterns, deference, and expectations (Goffman 1967; Luhmann, 1982). The internalization of symbolic elements of the domain, like value-orientations or ideologies, provides the source of meaning and motives associated with role-performance (Turner, 2010; Abrutyn, 2013b, 2015b).

Ultimately, as these four dimensions of space are made clearer and clearer and entrepreneurs have gained enough independence from other social units, the autonomy of an existing or new domain can be expanded. That is, the 'final step in the process involves the construction of institutional space' (Abrutyn, 2009: 456), which 'carves a "free space" between entrepreneurs [and other social actors]' (Colomy and Rhoades, 1994: 556). With greater autonomy comes a macro-level cultural/structural milieu that penetrates the goals, decisions, and actions of a significant proportion of the population. Political autonomy meant the restructuring of public space, annual rituals, and social

roles (e.g. the creation of roles increasingly detached from ascriptive criteria) (Abrutyn, 2013c); it also meant penetrating the lives and minds of greater numbers of people such that they too can cognitively distinguish political goals from kinship goals in theory, even if in practice they are blurred (Eisenstadt, 1963). For instance, most contemporary Americans can discern the differences between economic and kinship goals, political and educational values, and political and economic decisions, even if real events, actions, and actors are messier than the cognitive constructs we carry. Despite the blurriness, most Americans can critique a political entrepreneur who accepts bribes because, while it may be 'conventional', it still is 'corrupt'; likewise, many Americans can understand the dilemma surrounding a breadwinner who must choose between her job (and relocating) and her family's happiness, because the decisions and values of the two realms are relatively compartmentalized.

In Figure 4, the previous three models are tied together and important feedback loops between autonomy and other aspects of previous models is presented. Most apparently, greater autonomy implies greater physical, temporal, social, and symbolic differentiation as entrepreneurs expand the internal space by differentiating new social units and niches whose role is to regulate and coordinate action and goal setting, as well as act as subsidiary groups in support of the entrepreneurial unit. As such, autonomy eventually intensifies the degree to which power is centralized and over time reduces structural opportunities to some degree. To be sure, Figure 4 conceptualizes a multidimensional *process* that is meant to reflect the complexities of social reality; as such, even as power is becoming more consolidated, greater autonomy is also generating new exigencies that lead to some of the same problems discussed above concerning the suppression of power. That is, until the process breaks down and a society collapses, disintegrates, or is destroyed from without, these forces are constantly increasing or decreasing in value and, thus, affecting the others; in other words, stasis is nearly impossible as the values of various concepts expand or contract and have reverberations throughout the model. For example, the tenuous nature of autonomy leads to entrepreneurs feeling pressure to embark on new projects meant to maintain or expand their legitimacy, power-dependence, and bases of resources. These projects may also be in reaction to other elites, new competitors arising within or outside of the autonomous domain, or changes in the biotic environment.

The most important feedback to note, however, finds autonomy in a positive curvilinear relationship with exigencies: at first, autonomy reduces multiple problems as it inspires hope in new members, resolves certain problems, and often obfuscates some problems temporarily. However, autonomy brings new centers of domination and obligations; new elites who may shift their focus from collectively-oriented goals to self-aggrandizing goals; unforeseen exigencies predicated on growth in size and scale; and, finally, the increasing possibility that new elites will clash with old elites and destabilize major sectors of society.

Final thoughts

A theory, such as the one posited above, is only as good as its survival in the crucible of empirical analysis. By teasing out the dual-logic and four practical goals of projects, as
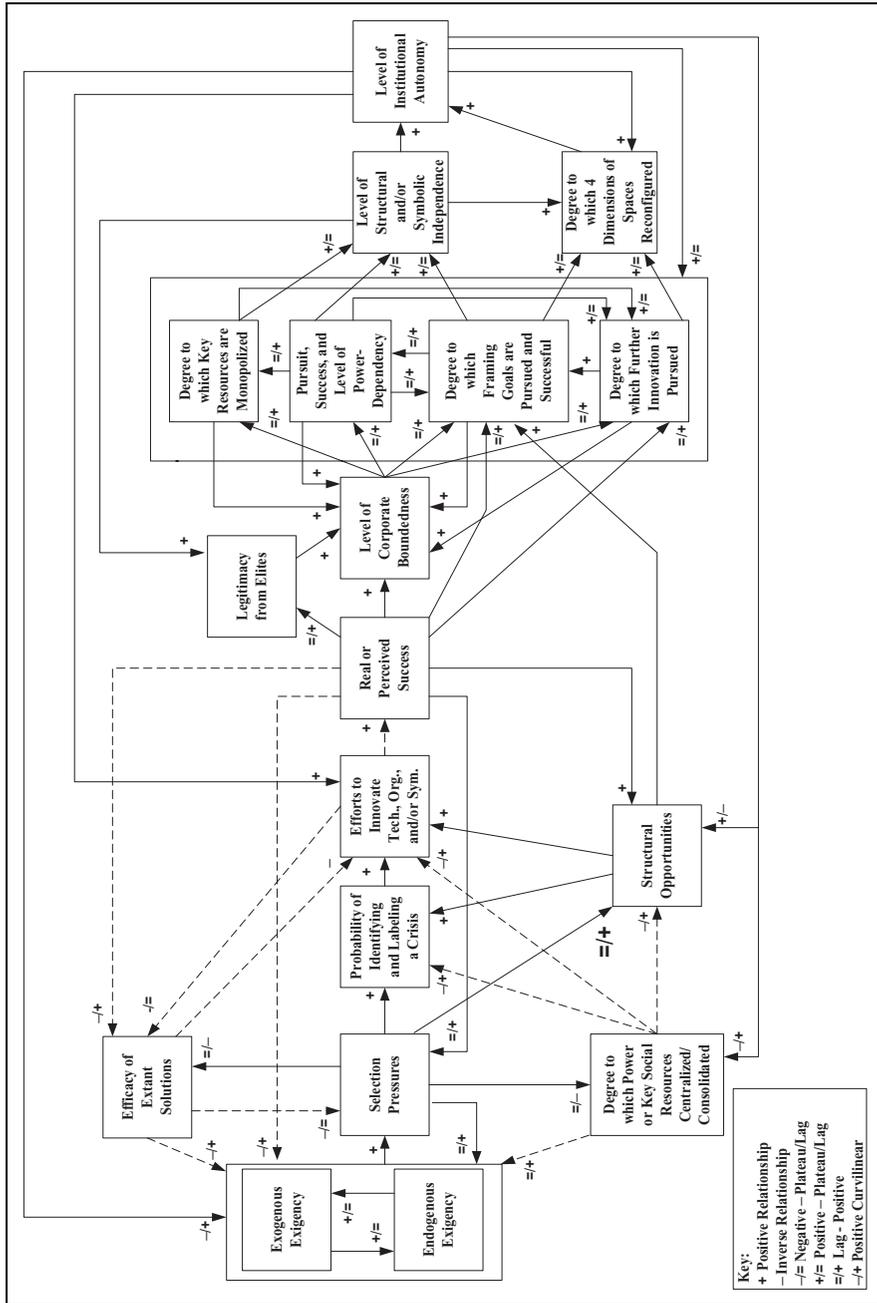
Figure 4. Full model of entrepreneurship.

well as noting that different combinations of logics and goals produce various outcomes, it would seem useful to examine historical cases to more clearly elucidate the relationship between projects and outcomes; this empirical analysis could provide for a fruitful historical typology of institutional projects and entrepreneurs. Additionally, historical-comparative analyses would also shed light on whether there are (a) certain conditions or intersections of conditions that generate certain types of projects more often than others, (b) some projects that tend to produce definite outcomes or if outcomes are more random and rooted in historical contingency, and (c) missing elements in the model. Finally, issues evolutionary sociologists have begun to take up in earnest, such as tempo and qualitative-versus-quantitative change (cf. Abrutyn and Lawrence, 2010), may benefit from rigorous case study analysis.

A second direction worth pursuing would focus directly on the links between the macro-level and the meso/micro-level. What exigencies are most pressing? At what point does a highly centralized power system break down and actually create the opportunities necessary for entrepreneurship? Are there conditions that favor a tighter coupling between the macro-level problems and the identification and labeling of a crisis? And finally, how do entrepreneurs ' understand' macro-level exigencies? Texts and other artifacts surely indicate what entrepreneurs were thinking, even if it is occasionally propaganda. All of these questions point to important gaps that could contribute to the theory's validity as well as add conditions or other key concepts currently missing.

A final potentially robust line of research involves the feedback loops at the end of the full model. In modern societies, there are plenty of autonomous institutional domains in which aspiring entrepreneurs can emerge and contend. It is easier to examine the earliest political entrepreneurs because institutional complexity was much less compared to other points in history. Thinking about social change through the lens of institutional autonomy may offer powerful tools to think about major changes, as well as minor ones. For instance, one of the 'classic' sociological problems has asked why the west rapidly grew dominant despite the material and cultural advantages China, India, and Islam held as late as the 14th century CE. Weber and Marx both looked to different periods, but both considered the emergence of new groups and cultural orientations as the prime engine. Neither of them took seriously the role the Catholic Church played in fashioning the trajectory of western history. To be sure, Weber's last work on capitalism (Weber, 2002 [1927]; also, Collins, 1980) began to take more seriously the Gregorian Reformation, but as most scholars who have approached the subject tend to do, the entrepreneurial projects are assumed to be primarily religious (cf. Eisenstadt, 1989: 210). A careful analysis, however, may find that Pope Gregory VII's biggest contributions were not religious but *legal* (cf. Abrutyn, 2009). That is, the Gregorian Reformation was not so much a period of religious entrepreneurship, but one of legal entrepreneurship and innovators like Gratian restructured the ontological reality of the Church, and then, the nobility, aristocracy, and urban merchants in western Europe (Berman, 1983).

The consequences of this entrepreneurial project had important unintended consequences rarely discussed elsewhere: the proliferation of relatively independent legal, economic, and eventually, educational entrepreneurs throughout Europe. The tenuous, yet real, power-sharing agreement between the religious and political domains throughout numerous European states created a set of major structural holes manipulated

by eager and artful entrepreneurs in domains previously low in autonomy elsewhere. This type of analysis could be easily extended to contemporary nation-states lending new tools to supplement previous research on the rise and fall of medieval Islam or the Soviet experiment and its failure. Finally, unlike new institutionalism which overemphasizes the convergence of organizational form (Thomas et al., 1987), this framework offers a means of studying both the convergences and divergences of structurally similar, yet culturally distinct states like Iran, Indonesia, Israel, and the US. In other words, the 'cultural myth' of the state may proliferate for the sake of legitimation, but these states have vastly different institutional complexes in terms of which domains are most autonomous and which entrepreneurial visions are most prolific, and thus, there is a chasm between the lives, goals, and worldviews of people in one state vis-à-vis another.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. It is true that less purposive forces exist as well. For instance, qualitative transformation in the economic sphere can radically alter what is considered possible, desirable, and 'real' among actors within the economic sphere and, perhaps, actors in other spheres as well, such as kinship actors; through these changes in economic ethic, an entire institutional domain – or a significant segment of it – can change structurally and/or culturally.
2. Weber's (1946b) solution was fraught with instability: bounded institutional orders were analogized as realms of 'jealous' gods bent on protecting their boundaries and expanding them at the expense of other gods. Durkheim's solution is far more optimistic, but one wonders whether or not his later work on civic morality and civic religion was any more convincing to him than the division of labor. Recall, the last book of the division of labor reveals his own doubts about the efficacy of his entire thesis.
3. Notable, autonomy is a process measurable only in *degree* and never in kind. Hence, cultural/structural systems are never *fully* or *totally* discrete.
4. It is worth noting that each case of entrepreneurship should be evaluated based on empirical evidence, and not the assumption of ulterior motives or by overemphasizing self-interest as a rational-actor model might be inclined to do. Rather, entrepreneurship, as the word implies, carries high risks with the extremes being exile or death, and thus if not initially amidst the earliest reactions by elites entrepreneurs become self-interested towards, at the very least, self-preservation. To be sure, in some cases projects may be entirely predicated on mobility and self-gain.

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