

A relational perspective of institutional work

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Abstract

This study develops a relational model of institutional work. The past research implies that the nature of relationships between individual actors actually shapes the nature of institutional work the actors engage in. However, the research falls short of an explicit, systematic analysis of different relationships between the actors and their work implications. This study basically argues that the actors' power positions, which might be dominant or subordinate in relation to those of other actors, and their meaning frameworks, which might diverge from or converge with those of other actors, lead the actors to engage in a particular type of relationship with those other actors, and this relationship gives a particular form to the institutional work of the actors in relation. Hence, this study explicitly locates institutional work within the context of the relationships and highlights that institutional work is a relational rather than structural or individual phenomenon.

Keywords: institutional work, relationships, power position, meaning framework

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This study develops a relational perspective of institutional work (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009; Lawrence, Suddaby, & Leca, 2009, 2011; Suddaby, 2010). The model developed in line with this perspective is based on the argument that within an institutional context, individual actors' positions of power, which might be dominant or subordinate in relation to those of other actors, and their frameworks of meaning, which might diverge from or converge with those of other actors, guide or lead the actors to develop different types of relationships with those other actors, which shape the associated institutional work the actors engage in. The existing literature on relative power positions and meaning frameworks implicitly shows this role of relationships between individual actors in the formation of institutional work (Zilber, 2002; Symon, Buehring, Johnson, & Cassell, 2008; Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009; Kraatz, 2009; Dacin, Munir, & Tracey, 2010; Tracey, Phillips, & Jarvis, 2011; Whittle, Suhomlinova, & Mueller, 2011; Daudigeos, 2013; Empson, Cleaver, & Allen, 2013; Smets & Jarzabkowski, 2013). Yet, it falls short of an explicit, systematic analysis of different types of relationships and associated work implications; the relationships are obscured by the literature's focus on the actors' power positions and meaning frameworks analyzed as structural sources of work. This study explicitly locates and analyzes institutional work within the context of relationships originated from and shaped by the power and meanings of the actors involved in the relationships (Zilber, 2002, 2009; Symon et al., 2008; Currie, Lockett, Finn, Martin, & Waring, 2012; McCann, Granter, Hyde, & Hassard, 2013). Hence, this study explores relationships between individual actors

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as a constituent of institutional work and highlights that institutional work is a relational rather than structural or individual phenomenon (Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009; Lawrence, Suddaby, & Leca, 2009). Institutional work is molded into particular forms by institutionally creative, reproductive, or disruptive relationships between the actors.

The study defines an institution as 'shared rules and typifications that identify categories of [individual] social actors and their appropriate activities or relationships' (Barley & Tolbert, 1997: 96). Institutional work is then described as 'the purposive action of individuals ... aimed at creating, maintaining, and disrupting institutions' and realized through relationships between those individual actors (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006: 215). Individual actors are more or less embedded, capable actors who can relate to other actors within an institutional context as they occupy a particular institutional position of power and hold a particular framework of meanings regarding the institution (Creed, 2003; Currie et al., 2012; Malsch & Gendron, 2013; McCann et al., 2013). Accordingly, individual actors involved in an institutional relationship are defined in relation to the positions and meanings of other involved actors or in terms of their relative power positions and meaning frameworks, which enable or constrain them to form relationships with those actors. Institutional relationships, thus, refer to institutionally creative, reproductive, or disruptive relationships between individual actors based in their compatible or incompatible meanings and shaped by their different degrees of power (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Foucault, 1980, 1990, 1995; Lawrence, Winn, & Jennings, 2001; Lawrence, 2008).

In the following sections, the study first reviews the existing research on individual actors' relative power positions and meaning frameworks, emphasizes that relationships between the actors as a constituent of institutional work are implicit in the discussion of the research, and develops research questions to address the lack of an explicit relational perspective. Next, based on the review and research questions, the study provides a relational model of institutional work with the positions and frameworks being its two dimensions, and elaborates on emerging relationships and associated institutional work of creation, maintenance, and disruption. Lastly, the study discusses the contributions to the literature on institutional work together with the areas for further research, highlights some managerial implications, and notes the limitations.

LITERATURE ON RELATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL WORK

In the literature, the emergence of institutional work is generally analyzed in terms of structural factors such as institutional power positions (Creed, 2003) and meaning frameworks (Van Dijk, Berends, Jelinek, Romme, & Weggeman, 2011). Institutional work seems to reside in those factors rather than relationships between individual actors. Thus, a particular work occurs, for example, when an actor occupies a dominant or subordinate institutional position with a certain degree of power or holds meanings similar to or different from institutional meanings, regardless of the actor's relationships with other actors. Institutional work is characterized as a structurally determined activity (Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009). Hence, the literature focuses on exploring structural factors as independent sources of work rather than locating institutional work within the context of relationships. However, the relationships are a main constituent of the work (Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009; Dacin, Munir, & Tracey, 2010; Empson, Cleaver, & Allen, 2013). In fact, this role of relationships is already suggested in several studies on institutional work (e.g., Kraatz, 2009; Tracey, Phillips, & Jarvis, 2011; Daudigeos, 2013; Smets & Jarzabkowski, 2013). It is implied that the actors are guided or led by some structural factors to relate to other actors and the associated work is shaped by the resulting relationship. Yet, as the focus of the existing studies is those factors not relationships, the relationships are taken for granted and left unexplored. This study addresses this gap in the literature, the lack of an explicit and systematic relational perspective on institutional work, and analyzes how different types of relationships

between individual actors originate from structural factors and give shape to institutional work in particular ways.

In order to develop a relational perspective, this study focuses on two structural factors extensively explored by the past research. Relative power positions refer to the dominant or subordinate positions occupied by individual actors in relation to the positions of other actors within an institutional context (Creed, 2003; Symon et al., 2008; Kraatz, 2009; Ritvala & Granqvist, 2009; Currie et al., 2012; Grafstrom & Windell, 2012). Relative meaning frameworks refer to the norms and beliefs followed by individual actors in relation to similar or different norms and beliefs of other actors within an institutional context (Zilber, 2002; Tracey, Phillips, & Jarvis, 2011; Van Dijk et al., 2011; Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012; Heaphy, 2013; Malsch & Gendron, 2013; McCann et al., 2013). They are two critical structural components of a relational model of institutional work, because the actors develop different relationships with other actors through relative institutional positions and meanings (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Foucault, 1980, 1990, 1995; Creed, 2003; Dacin, Munir, & Tracey, 2010). The actors adopt institutional meanings and act on institutional positions enabled and constrained by those meanings to become more or less embedded, capable actors who can relate to other actors legitimately and effectively, albeit in different ways. In return, the emerging relationships form the ground for particular types of institutional work to emerge. Hence, relational institutional work is structurally shaped by the relative power positions and meaning frameworks of the actors involved in the relationships. The past research already mentions this link between the positions and relationships (Symon et al., 2008; Ritvala & Granqvist, 2009; Grafstrom & Windell, 2012) as well as the frameworks and relationships (Zilber, 2009; Malsch & Gendron, 2013; Smets & Jarzabkowski, 2013), though implicitly and without elaboration. Thus, the study looks into how different types of relationships between individual actors originate from the relative power positions and meaning frameworks of those actors, and eventually become a constituent of different types of institutional work.

Therefore, this section reviews the literature, which explicitly focuses on power positions and meaning frameworks, yet, implicitly mentions the constitutive, formative role of relationships for institutional work. The review uncovers this implicit relational aspect, identifies the lack of an explicit, systematic relational perspective on institutional work as the gap in the literature, and provides a basis for the relational model developed in the theory building section that follows.

Relational institutional work and relative power positions

One of the structural bases of relational institutional work is relative power positions. Individual actors are enabled or constrained by their relatively dominant or subordinate positions with differential power within the institution to form a particular relationship with other actors. This relationship, in return, gives a particular form to the resulting institutional work.

First, the literature on relative power positions implies that the actors' relationships with other actors can give institutional work a creative character (Creed, 2003; Kraatz, 2009; Ritvala & Granqvist, 2009; Creed, Dejordy, & Lok, 2010; Daudigeos, 2013). For example, in the case of a leader and followers, leaders are in a control relationship with followers and, thus, can act autonomously to create new institutional norms (Kraatz, 2009). They can develop consensual relationships as well with other powerful actors with different interests. With the support of those powerful actors as well as followers, they give coherence to new institutions (Kraatz, 2009). Similarly, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) ministers engage in a relationship of resistance with individual church authorities owing to their homosexual orientation (Creed, 2003; Creed, Dejordy, & Lok, 2010). They also relate to the authorities through the common religious tradition of inclusion. These relationships between the subordinate and dominant actors of the church, then, make possible the creation of a more inclusive understanding as to who is a legitimate minister. Moreover, the actors with a bridging yet

subordinate position within an institutional network like individual scientists (Ritvala & Granqvist, 2009) and occupational safety and health professionals (Daudigeos, 2013) try to form strong ties with different powerful actors in the field to embark on a change project. They try to build legitimacy for new local norms and practices through those connections to established actors in the scientific, professional, and political communities. The legitimacy based on the relationships with different established actors helps them even challenge some other powerful actors and construct new norms and practices as dominant in the field.

Second, the literature suggests that the relationships can give institutional work a reproductive shape (Kraatz, 2009; Currie et al., 2012; Grafstrom & Windell, 2012). Specialist doctors with established elite positions, for example, engage in a relationship of control with new actors in the medical field to maintain the *status quo*; they delegate routine tasks to the new actors and socialize those actors on the basis of their formal knowledge and occupational socialization (Currie et al., 2012). They also cooperate with other nonelite professionals for the continuation of the *status quo*. Hence, their position is useful to maintain their professional status to the extent that it allows developing different types of relationships with the new and existing actors. A similar dependency relationship emerges between dominant actors and bloggers in the media (Grafstrom & Windell, 2012). The dependence of bloggers on dominant media actors and channels to reach more readers facilitates the formation of institutional work of maintenance. Bloggers have to cooperate with established actors and use mainstream channels to realize their goals and interests within the constraints of dominant media practices, unavoidably reproducing dominant institutions as well as existing dependency relationships (Grafstrom & Windell, 2012).

Third, the literature indicates that the relationships can also give institutional work a disruptive form (Creed, 2003; Symon et al., 2008; Creed, Dejordy, & Lok, 2010). Qualitative management researchers, for example, develop a research community through common norms and practices, on which they relate to and cooperate with one another (Symon et al., 2008). Through ongoing in-group relationships, individual qualitative researchers construct and reproduce a quantitative–qualitative divide, depicting the latter as morally and intellectually superior. Their reproductive relationships become a basis to rhetorically disrupt and delegitimize quantitative research, which is criticized as being output – more than quality-oriented, political more than scientific, and based on dominant institutions more than individual efforts. Like qualitative researchers, individual GLBT ministers form a group of common problems and norms originated from a disadvantaged position (Creed, 2003; Creed, Dejordy, & Lok, 2010). Their in-group relationships are then turned into a relationship of resistance against the church authorities. Within those relationships, the ministers radically disrupt the heterosexuality of the church, resisting the pressures of the authorities and trying to legitimize homosexuality within the church based on the religious tradition of inclusion.

Relational institutional work and relative meaning frameworks

Another structural basis of relational institutional work is relative meaning frameworks. Individual actors develop relationships with other actors based on their relatively similar or different meanings of institutional norms and practices. The nature of those relationships affects the nature of institutional work.

First, the studies on relative meaning frameworks suggest that relationships between the actors can give institutional work a creative form (Creed, 2003; George, Chattopadhyay, Sitkin, & Barden, 2006; Bjerregaard, 2011; Tracey, Phillips, & Jarvis, 2011; Van Dijk et al., 2011; Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012; Smets & Jarzabkowski, 2013). For example, in an institutional field of multiple frameworks composed of groups of individuals with different norms and interests, individual actors develop relationships with other actors on the basis of common meanings and interests to ensure support for their change projects (Van Dijk et al., 2011). Those relationships simultaneously put the

actors in a relationship of conflict with some other individual actors with opposite meanings and interests. Hence, creative institutional work emerges within a relationship complex of cooperation and conflict. In general, subordinate actors need to communicate their change projects to and develop constructive relationships with especially the powerful members of the field, for example, in the politics and media (Tracey, Phillips, & Jarvis, 2011). Constructive relationships, which bring elements from the frameworks of different subordinate and dominant actors together, can help form a new hybrid meaning framework. Under the conditions of institutional multiplicity, creation work is, thus, possible only when individual actors are able to relate to other supportive, influential actors. Moreover, creative novel solutions to daily problems, generally embedded in contradictory institutional meanings, are possible when subordinate actors experiencing those problems interact with referent actors in the field (Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012; Smets & Jarzabkowski, 2013). Through their interactions, subordinate actors highlight common meanings with the referent actors to seek their approval for those novel solutions. The solutions are institutionalized only after this approval is obtained and, thus, the interaction between the referent and subordinate actors is characterized more by cooperation than by information exchange.

Second, the studies indicate that the actors' relationships can give institutional work a reproductive shape (Zilber, 2002, 2009; George et al., 2006; Lefsrud & Meyer, 2012; Heaphy, 2013; McCann et al., 2013; Raviola & Norback, 2013). In a rape crisis center, for example, there is a relationship of conflict between feminist volunteers, who have a political meaning framework, and therapeutic volunteers, who have a professional framework (Zilber, 2002). Yet, there is also a relationship of mutual dependence between the volunteers as the center's operations necessitate both political mobilization and therapeutic support. Thus, those relationships of conflict and dependence lead to a fragile balance between the two frameworks, which continue to coexist or be maintained within the general framework of the center. An institutional framework is also reproduced within individual actors' consensual relationships and routines, which refer continuously to a common framework as in the case of individual paramedics in the United Kingdom (McCann et al., 2013). Against the professionalization of their work, the paramedics maintain their established, daily practices as they continue to relate to other individual paramedics and actors in the healthcare field through those practices. In fact, they are able to cope with target pressures and poor working conditions through their daily local practices and relationships shaped by those conditions and related problems. Similarly, dominant meaning frameworks and narratives are maintained only when subordinate actors reinterpret and modify those frameworks to fit their daily conditions and local relationships (Zilber, 2009; Raviola & Norback, 2013). Hence, dominant frameworks continue to exist as a locally adaptable and still institutionally coherent template as they enable individual actors to develop relationships with other actors in a way to address local situations and problems. In other words, the actors' everyday relationships embody specific interpretations of the same institutional framework, essentially reproducing the framework. Furthermore, those daily relationships can be facilitated by explicit institutional rules, which reflect particular meaning frameworks (Heaphy, 2013). This is the case, for example, when individual patient advocates develop and sustain relationships with patients, families, and staff in hospitals on the basis of formal rules to repair perceived breaches in role assumptions and expectations. Through those relationships facilitated by the rules, common institutional meanings are reconstructed and, thus, maintained for those actors experiencing the breaches yet not equipped with the full knowledge of the rules to reinterpret and repair those breaches.

Third, the studies imply that the relationships can also give institutional work a disruptive character (Zilber, 2002; Heaphy, 2013; Malsch & Gendron, 2013; McCann et al., 2013). For example, disruption occurs when individual patient advocates and some doctors fail to develop a consensus-based relationship owing to their different interpretations of the rules (Heaphy, 2013). The advocates' attempts to repair role breaches are blocked by some, relatively powerful, doctors whose main concern

is to preserve medical authority rather than provide patients with medical resources. This concern, which points to two diverging frameworks, puts individual advocates and those doctors in a relationship of conflict as well as power, which disrupts the patient-oriented framework in hospitals. Different frameworks also result in a conflicting and disruptive relationship between traditional accounting experts and new professionals with expertise in other areas such as law and strategy (Malsch & Gendron, 2013). Embedded in different meanings, one in a professional accounting orientation and the other in a commercial consulting perspective, the actors are in a relationship of struggle with the individual members of the other framework to promote their own meanings, whereas disrupting the other. Facilitated by the specialized expert knowledge of the actors as well as by social and professional exchanges between the members of the same framework, this disruptive relationship eventually leads to the erosion of the traditional accounting practice, transforming the field toward a more commercial understanding. In-group relationships, similarly, facilitate a disruptive relationship with the members of an outer group holding a different framework as in the rape crisis center staffed by political and professional volunteers (Zilber, 2002). Socialized within their group norms and interactions, political and professional volunteers try to dominate the center's practices and preserve their status. Thus, they constantly undermine one another's meanings and practices, despite their interdependence.

Research questions

The literature review shows that relationships between individual actors are often implicit in the discussion of the studies emphasizing the actors' relative power positions and meaning frameworks, and that different relationships shape institutional work in different ways. One question is, how those relationships emerge to give institutional work a particular form? The literature points out that relative power positions and meaning frameworks are both a structural factor for the relationships to emerge as a constituent of institutional work. In fact, the actors are enabled, constrained, and guided by their dominant or subordinate positions and their similar or different frameworks relative to those of other actors to form relationships with those other actors and the resulting relationships shape whether it is a work of creation, maintenance, or disruption.

Yet, in the literature, the link between the positions and relationships as well as between the frameworks and relationships is generally unexplored. With the emphasis on the positions and frameworks, individual actors guided by those positions and frameworks seem to be isolated from their relationships with other actors. Thus, the actors' relationships as a constituent of work are obscured; the actors' positions and frameworks are reified as independent structural sources that directly determine the course of their actions and the nature of institutional work (Barley & Tolbert, 1997). A second related question is, then, how relative power positions and meaning frameworks lead to relationships between individual actors, which shape associated institutional work in return? Therefore, this study looks into the question of how the dominant or subordinate power positions and similar or different meaning frameworks of the actors in relation to other actors help them to form different types of relationships with those other actors, which ultimately become a basis of different types of institutional work. The study explicitly analyzes the link between the positions, frameworks, and relationships, and develops a relational model, which identifies different relationships and associated work of creation, maintenance, or disruption.

A RELATIONAL MODEL OF INSTITUTIONAL WORK

The literature identifies relative power positions and meaning frameworks as two implicit structural factors behind the emergence of relationships between individual actors. It also distinguishes between dominant and subordinate positions (e.g., Kraatz, 2009; Creed, Dejordy, & Lok, 2010) as well as

between different/diverging and similar/converging meanings (e.g., Heaphy, 2013; Malsch & Gendron, 2013). The relational model developed is based on the implicit link between those two factors (power and meanings) and their subdimensions (dominant/subordinate and diverging/converging), and the relationships. In fact, the literature shows that in a field of institutional multiplicity, the interaction between asymmetries of power and incompatibilities of meanings leads the actors to develop different types of temporary settlements, which might later be a basis to institutionalize new organizational forms, although this interaction is not explored within the context of the actors' relationships (Rao & Kenney, 2008). Thus, the basic argument of the model is that the actors' power positions, which might be dominant or subordinate in relation to those of other actors, and their meaning frameworks, which might diverge from or converge with those of other actors, lead the actors to engage in a particular type of relationship with those other actors, and this relationship shapes associated institutional work into a particular form.

Individual actors with dominant positions represent established institutional meanings and have more access to institutional resources (Voronov & Vince, 2012). They are centrally located and, thus, more embedded with the leverage (Kraatz, 2009). They also have vested interests in the establishment, trying to defend and control established processes (Currie et al., 2012). In contrast, the actors with subordinate positions are less embedded within established frameworks (Currie et al., 2012), having much less access to the resources (Voronov & Vince, 2012). In some cases, they are marginalized and excluded from mainstream institutional channels (Symon et al., 2008; Creed, Dejordy, & Lok, 2010). They are often dependent on dominant actors (Grafstrom & Windell, 2012); they need connections to dominant frameworks and actors to achieve their goals (Ritvala & Granqvist, 2009; Daudigeos, 2013). Hence, the involvement of dominant or subordinate actors in a relationship affects the nature of the relationship as well as resulting institutional work owing to the actors' different degrees of embeddedness, power, and autonomy, which might enable or constrain the actors in creative, reproductive, or disruptive directions within the relationship.

The diverging meaning frameworks of individual actors involved in a relationship are likely to put them in a situation of conflict as the frameworks represent different conditions, problems, and interests, and guide the actors' interpretations on and actions toward the same institutional phenomena in different directions (Zilber, 2002; Lefsrud & Meyer, 2012). A relationship of conflict, in return, results in the actors' attempts of control over and resistance to other actors with conflicting meanings to preserve and, if possible, establish their own meanings as well as positions as the dominant, and the relative power of the actors in the relationship is more emphasized (Foucault, 1980, 1990, 1995; Lawrence, 2008; Seeck & Kantola, 2009; Valikangas & Seeck, 2011). Thus, in a relationship of conflict, institutionally disruptive and creative actions are more likely. The implicit assumption here is that operational productivity is a common goal for all the actors and highlighted when the actors' frameworks diverge and, thus, a relationship of conflict emerges (Foucault, 1980, 1990, 1995). When productivity as a goal is highlighted, the actors are more likely to deviate from established norms and practices, and incorporate new ones to increase productivity (Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012; Malsch & Gendron, 2013). Hence, the productivity goal reproduces the conflicting relationship, in which it is embedded. Within this relationship, it provides a basis or reference for the actors to increase their relative power and justify their diverging frameworks, which refer to different meanings on the same goal of productivity.

In contrast, the converging frameworks of individual actors involved in a relationship are likely to create a situation of consensus as similar frameworks represent similar conditions, problems, and interests, and lead to similar interpretations and actions within the institutional context (Zilber, 2009; Heaphy, 2013). A relationship of consensus, then, enables the actors to develop a mutual understanding with other actors in the relationship and maintain their own as well as the other frameworks and relative positions, and the common meanings of the actors in the relationship are more

emphasized (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Zilber, 2002). Thus, in a relationship of consensus, institutionally reproductive actions are more likely. The implicit assumption here is that social stability is a common goal for all the actors and is highlighted when the actors' frameworks converge and, thus, a relationship of consensus emerges (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). When social stability as a goal is highlighted, the actors are more likely to maintain established norms and practices and confirm shared meanings to ensure stability (Heaphy, 2013; McCann et al., 2013). Hence, the social stability goal reproduces the consensual relationship, in which it is embedded. Within this relationship, it provides a basis or reference for the actors to observe common meanings and preserve their converging frameworks, which refer to similar meanings on the same goal of social stability.

Therefore, six types of relationships characterized mainly by conflict or consensus emerge with different implications in terms of institutional work: between two actors with dominant positions with diverging meanings, two actors with subordinate positions with diverging meanings, one actor with a dominant position and another with a subordinate position with diverging meanings, two actors with dominant positions and converging meanings, two actors with subordinate positions and converging meanings, and one actor with a dominant position and another with a subordinate position with converging meanings. Table 1 depicts the relational model including these six relationships and associated work implications. The discussion that follows develops a more detailed analysis of each of the six relationships together with their implications for institutional work.

Relationships between two dominant actors with diverging meanings

In a relationship in which only dominant individual actors with diverging or conflicting meanings are involved and, thus, the relative power of the actors is emphasized, all three types of institutional work are possible. Diverging meaning frameworks are likely to coexist, together with associated positions and conflicting relationships, when they are equally important for the productive existence of institutional practices (Zilber, 2002; Malsch & Gendron, 2013). This is the case, for example, in the public accounting field where the actors with meanings grounded in professionalism and commercialism

TABLE 1. RELATIONAL MODEL OF INSTITUTIONAL WORK: SIX TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS AND ASSOCIATED INSTITUTIONAL WORK OF CREATION, MAINTENANCE, OR DISRUPTION

<i>Relative power positions of actors within relationships</i>	<i>Relative meaning frameworks of actors within relationships</i>	
	<i>Diverging frames of meanings</i>	<i>Converging frames of meanings</i>
<i>Dominant actor versus dominant actor</i>	Maintenance and disruption (both frames productive) Creation (only one frame productive)	Maintenance (reproduction and social stability)
<i>Subordinate actor versus subordinate actor</i>	Disruption (operational ineffectiveness)	Maintenance (frames similar to dominant frame) Disruption (frames different from dominant frame)
<i>Dominant actor versus subordinate actor</i>	Maintenance (dominant frame productive) Disruption (subordinate frame productive)	Maintenance (reproduction and social stability) Creation (novelty tied to dominant frame)

claim and struggle with each other for dominance (Malsch & Gendron, 2013), or in a rape crisis center whose effectiveness is ensured by a fragile balance between feminist and therapeutic meanings and practices, which leads to an ongoing conflict between feminist and therapeutic volunteers (Zilber, 2002). This is a situation of endless struggle between the actors, with conflicting frameworks as the dominance of one framework might be the end of the both (Malsch & Gendron, 2013). Thus, conflicting frameworks coexist to ensure operational productivity, based on the power and embeddedness of the actors representing them and competing with the representatives of other frameworks, and the *status quo* is maintained.

Yet, continuous struggle means continuous disruption as the grounds of the coexistence, diverging frameworks, are continuously under attack from the actors of other frameworks who have the power to do so. An ongoing problem of productivity, together with solution attempts, emerges (Van Dijk et al., 2011). The balance might gradually break down owing to the actors' continuous disruption attempts, which might succeed when one of the frameworks proves to be more associated with operational productivity or utility and becomes less dependent on other frameworks (Malsch & Gendron, 2013). This gradual increase in the autonomy and dominance of an institutional meaning framework can further be facilitated if the framework is codified into the specialized knowledge or expertise of professionals (Lefsrud & Meyer, 2012; Empson, Cleaver, & Allen, 2013; Malsch & Gendron, 2013). The codification increases the framework's practical utility for proponents and against opponents. It eases the adoption and application by the actors, and diffusion of the framework. Then, owing to the increased autonomy and power of the actors representing the now dominant framework, a new possibly hybrid institution can emerge, integrating other frameworks as subordinate. This at the same time signals the emergence of a common understanding between dominant actors now with similar or converging frameworks and likely to engage in a consensual relationship and, thus, institutional work of maintenance.

NASA's space shuttle programs and oscillation between the frameworks of observing flight schedules and ensuring safety can also be used to exemplify this first type (and other types) of relationship and associated implications in terms of institutional work (Magnuson, Branegan, & Hannifin, 1986; McConnell, 1987; Columbia Accident Investigation Board, 2003; Covault, 2003). After the Challenger disaster, the members of the presidential commission investigating the disaster tried to establish safety as a dominant framework in NASA, whereas the NASA's senior managers' priority was to be on schedule. In fact, the disaster showed that both frameworks were needed for the operational success of the space shuttle programs and ongoing financial support of the government. Thus, the two frameworks coexisted and were maintained within NASA for a while, both as a response to the disaster and as a result of the power of the commission members representing the government and the NASA managers. However, the relationship between these two groups of actors was also disruptive because the frameworks were in conflict; trying to meet the safety standards would cause delays in the flights, whereas trying to meet the deadlines would cause safety problems. Eventually, schedule concerns, combined with cost concerns, dominated safety concerns in NASA. As a result, the success was identified with no delay in the flights, which also decreased the costs. Hence, the schedule framework was recreated as the dominant framework with some, ineffective, safety procedures and short-term cost-cutting measures, despite the disastrous experience of the Challenger. The result was another disaster, the space shuttle Columbia's explosion during its reentry into the earth atmosphere.

Relationships between two subordinate actors with diverging meanings

In a relationship in which only subordinate individual actors with diverging or conflicting meanings are involved and, thus, the relative power of the actors is emphasized, institutional work is most likely of disruption. For example, subordinate actors' attempts to address local conditions and daily operational

problems through conflicting frameworks create an ongoing problem of instability in routines and inefficiency in operations (Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012; McCann et al., 2013). This conflict-based relationship between subordinate actors blocks formation and stabilization of productive routines in the daily experience of the actors and subjects an already or potentially dominant institutional framework to the ongoing disruptive effects of alternative frameworks. A dominant framework cannot be conclusively established at the everyday level even when adopted by most subordinate actors, as some other actors deviate from that framework in their relationships (McCann et al., 2013). When an alternative framework promises increasing productivity, disruption still occurs unless the productive deviation is integrated into the dominant framework; without integration, the deviation continues to exist as a strong alternative whose potential is ignored and undermines the basis of the dominant framework by contributing to the existing incoherence in institutional meanings and relationships and by exposing the relative unproductivity of the framework at the subordinate level (Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012).

Subordinate actors are less likely to have the resources to settle the conflict in favor of a particular framework. They need to involve the dominant actors who support their meanings in their relationships with other subordinate actors and to develop a common framework with those powerful actors (Tracey, Phillips, & Jarvis, 2011; Van Dijk et al., 2011; Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012; Daudigeos, 2013). With this involvement, the dominant framework can be maintained or alternative meanings can be integrated. Without it, disruptive relationships between subordinate actors are reproduced.

NASA officially attempted to decentralize its safety programs to encourage especially the engineers and technical experts at subordinate levels to be critical in safety issues. This would ensure independent control over NASA operations and was a response to the critics after the Challenger disaster. Yet, following a brief period of safety orientation, the schedule framework was reestablished together with a cost-cutting attitude, reviving many of the predisaster practices at operational, line levels. At those lower levels, the engineers concerned about flight safety were in conflict with those trying to meet the deadlines. As the success was identified with meeting the deadlines with the minimum cost, this professional conflict of opinions intensified when the programs were behind their schedules. It was actually a disruption for the smooth progression and timely completion of the programs. Thus, this line-level conflict was also reflected in higher, managerial, levels and generally dissolved in favor of the schedules with managerial intervention.

Relationships between a dominant and a subordinate actor with diverging meanings

In a relationship in which dominant and subordinate individual actors with diverging or conflicting meanings are involved and, thus, the relative power of the actors is emphasized, institutional work is likely to be of either maintenance or disruption. Dominant actors' attempts of control over subordinate actors in favor of the existing *status quo* and subordinate actors' resistance shape the nature of institutional work. When the dominant framework and actors represent operational productivity, this control/resistance relationship helps form maintenance work. This is the case when leaders try to keep the disruptive attempts of subordinates within institutional limits (Kraatz, 2009), when mainstream media actors protect their power against bloggers by providing the latter with access to established channels and, thus, a larger audience (Grafstrom & Windell, 2012), or when elite health professionals attempt to control novel actors with new meanings and roles on the basis of medical effectiveness until those actors' integration into the professional framework (Currie et al., 2012). Health professionals, for example, initially develop a control relationship with new actors by delegating routine controllable tasks as well as controlling service delivery (Currie et al., 2012). They justify this relationship with their formal education and occupational socialization claimed to help better mediate medical risks.

Health specialists, thus, are able to keep new actors and roles within the limits of the current framework and roles, which ensure medical effectiveness, and block the transformation of their dominant roles. Once new actors are integrated into the current framework through education, maintenance work continues on the basis of now common meanings and associated consensual relationships.

When subordinate actors' framework has the potential to improve productivity, yet, is denied integration, disruption work is likely. This refers to a case in which subordinate actors' new productive meanings are contained by dominant actors. The containment of new researchers' scientific findings by established researchers (Ritvala & Granqvist, 2009), exclusion of GLBT ministers by the church authorities with a heterosexual understanding (Creed, 2003; Creed, Dejordy, & Lok, 2010), and prevention of the care-oriented attempts of patient advocates by the doctors (Heaphy, 2013) are some examples. When the religious authorities deny GLBT ministers occupational roles, for instance, it is disruption because this denial is contrary to the established religious tradition of inclusion; in fact, the resulting conflict between the authorities and ministers prevents the expansion of the institutional religious realm (bringing homosexuals as well as heterosexuals under the control of the authorities). Similarly, when some doctors block patient advocates' repair of role breaches to emphasize their medical authority, disruption occurs because this is a block to better patient care. As a result of the conflicting relationship between the doctors and advocates and less effective care, fewer patients will subject themselves to the control of those doctors. In this case, the disruptive relationship is facilitated by explicitly codified rules (Heaphy, 2013). Owing to their specialized position, patient advocates have the full knowledge of formal rules regarding patient care. The rules become their primary tool to address role breaches and inevitably put them in a relationship of conflict with the doctors concerned mainly with medical authority. The disruptive relationship, in both cases, can later be a source of integration and making creation work possible when the ministers develop a common understanding with the authorities based on the framework of inclusion to overcome the heterosexual orthodoxy (Creed, Dejordy, & Lok, 2010), and when the doctors reciprocate the advocates with a focus on patient care rather than medical authority (Heaphy, 2013).

In NASA, the relationship between safety-oriented engineers and schedule-oriented managers can be analyzed as both reproductive and disruptive. In the short term, it was reproductive, maintaining the schedule framework. The success was to meet the deadlines. The managers used their power over the engineers to refuse time-consuming safety measures and prevent delays in the schedules. This generated short-term returns including rather timely flights and cost savings. In the long term, though, the relationship was disruptive because the safety framework held by the engineers represented a disaster-free success, yet, was denied integration. NASA managers tried to suppress this alternative framework and the engineers with critical views were cut from the communication channels through cultural and organizational barriers. Consequently, the disruption resulted in two disasters, which actually revealed that the safety framework would be productive in the long term and prevent those disasters.

Relationships between two dominant actors with converging meanings

In a relationship in which only dominant individual actors with converging or consensual meanings are involved and, thus, the common meanings of the actors are emphasized, institutional work of maintenance is most likely. Maintenance is actually expected in the case of consensus-based relationships, which are characterized by social stability and reproduction (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). It is also facilitated when a group of dominant actors face the threat of an alternative framework and engage in defensive work (Zilber, 2002; Currie et al., 2012; Grafstrom & Windell, 2012). For example, there is a consensual relationship between specialist doctors who defend their established positions and occupational framework against new roles and actors (Currie et al., 2012). Owing to their common education and socialization, which help develop a shared meaning framework, the

doctors are able to act in coordination when they delegate routine tasks to the new actors to coopt them into the established relationships. The doctors act as a collective unit on the basis of shared meanings to neutralize the threat of new frameworks and roles, and preserve the established social stability and 'normal' way of life within their group. This is also the preservation of their already dominant positions as well as relationships with subordinate actors. To the extent that the cooptation is successful, a mutual understanding is also developed with subordinate actors, together with social stability being reproduced.

Similarly, the existence of blogs and bloggers as an alternative to mainstream channels triggers the defensive maintenance work of established media actors (Grafstrom & Windell, 2012). There seems to be a consensus within the group of dominant media actors as to what represents mainstream media and how to integrate alternatives. This consensus is based not only on common meanings but also on the risk of losing privileged positions embedded in the same meanings; thus, the consensus-based in-group relationships generate similar actions against bloggers in different settings. The established actors integrate bloggers into the mainstream media as subordinate actors, making conventional channels available for bloggers while developing controls on their articles. Blogs and bloggers as a potentially strong basis of 'new media' are partially neutralized with this defensive move grounded in the dominant group members' common meanings and relationships oriented to maintain their positions of control over access to most readers. Social stability in the media field is also maintained against the disruptive effects of 'new media' as the institutional relationships are still regulated in line with the established framework. Besides, as the integration becomes gradually successful, a common understanding emerges between dominant and subordinate media actors and social stability is reinforced.

At the time of the Challenger disaster, NASA had a matrix organization whose stability depended on the coordination between the headquarters in Washington, DC, mission control in Texas, engineering operations in Alabama, and assembly and launch center in Florida. Although tensions and contentions occurred between these centers, there was also a general agreement on how to carry out the space shuttle programs. This was the case especially between the senior managers at the headquarters, who were under the pressure of the government for cutting costs, and the managers at the engineering operations, who had an achievement culture with little tolerance for delays. Thus, the similar frameworks of these two groups of managers helped maintain the NASA's general framework of being on schedule. The senior managers observed the schedules with cost concerns, whereas the engineering managers suppressed critical views to protect the center's image of achievement and opposed any delays in the schedules. A stable operational environment based in the schedules continued to exist.

Relationships between two subordinate actors with converging meanings

In a relationship in which only subordinate individual actors with converging or consensual meanings are involved and, thus, the common meanings of the actors are emphasized, institutional work of maintenance or disruption is likely to be observed. When subordinate actors' common meanings and associated relationships are embedded within an institutional framework similar to or shaped by the dominant framework, the associated institutional work is naturally characterized by reproduction and maintenance (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Zilber, 2009; Heaphy, 2013; McCann et al., 2013). Individual paramedics in the United Kingdom, for example, develop a common framework based in similar daily experiences and problems, and reproduce associated meanings through ongoing in-group relationships (McCann et al., 2013). Hence, they maintain the dominant institutional framework as well, which creates and sustains the conditions of their daily work, despite the professionalization option. For the paramedics, the dominant framework and their local framework as its byproduct remain to be the only option that addresses routine problems and, thus, promises stability in the workplace relationships even though this option also reproduces an institutionally subordinate position.

Hence, the new project of professionalization is not supported by the paramedics who continue to relate to one another as well as to established powerful actors in the healthcare field through the same institutional meanings and positions.

Subordinate actors' consensus-based relationships and thus maintenance work can be facilitated by explicit rules, which concretize the common framework (Heaphy, 2013). The rules speed convergence toward common meanings, making those meanings more understandable and practicable. Patient advocates' use of rules in their relationships with patients, families, and hospital staff, for example, facilitates understanding between the advocates and those actors and helps restore established assumptions and relationships. Hence, perceived role breaches can be addressed before they lead to legitimacy problems, and institutional stability is reproduced.

Subordinate actors' shared meanings and relationships might also be embedded within a framework diverging from the dominant framework; institutional work is then likely to be characterized by disruption (Symon et al., 2008; Creed, Dejordy, & Lok, 2010). Qualitative researchers, for example, are in a relationship of consensus grounded in their common research practices (Symon et al., 2008). Their in-group consensus is reflected in their common rhetorical work of disruption, which tries to undermine the legitimacy of quantitative research practices. Qualitative researchers together construct and maintain a quantitative–qualitative divide, resisting integration into the dominant practice. Thus, they pose a continuous threat to the dominant framework with their disruptive attempts. The disruptive existence of an alternative paradigm reproduced through the in-group consensual relationships of individual qualitative researchers creates an ongoing instability in the field and paradigm wars, this divide might be concluded by the integration of qualitative into quantitative research or formation of a new balance between the two.

At subordinate, operational levels in NASA, there were two alternative paradigms or frameworks. One group of engineers reproduced the dominant framework through their ongoing schedule-oriented practices. This group acted in coordination with the managers, approving or contributing to the approval of unsafe flights. As a group, they shared the managers' optimism based mostly on deadline and cost concerns. With the daily in-group engagements of these engineers, the schedules continued to serve as the basis of social stability in NASA. In contrast, a second group of engineers oriented to safety tried to voice their related concerns. Although different, especially critical, opinions were stifled, these critical engineers reproduced an alternative framework through their in-group relationships. They managed to identify and highlight safety-related issues; yet, those issues were not much reflected at managerial levels and considered as marginal. In this sense, safety remained as a disruptive framework, partly damaging the established, schedule based, stability of NASA as an institution.

Relationships between a dominant and a subordinate actor with converging meanings

In a relationship in which dominant and subordinate individual actors with converging or consensual meanings are involved and, thus, the common meanings of the actors are emphasized, maintenance and creation works are likely. In general, consensus-based relationships often characterized by reproduction catalyze maintenance with no or only minor modifications in existing meanings and positions (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Kraatz, 2009; Zilber, 2009; Dacin, Munir, & Tracey, 2010; Currie et al., 2012; Grafstrom & Windell, 2012). The basis of social stability is more or less preserved as new roles and relationships are interpreted within the existing limits of the dominant framework and relationships. For example, following a relationship of control, a relationship of consensus is developed between specialist doctors and new actors through education and cooperation (Currie et al., 2012). The new roles performed by new actors are integrated into the dominant framework, they are normalized and stabilized within the same framework, whereas the roles of the doctors remain intact. Hence, social stability grounded in the doctors' dominant position is more or less reproduced, with a

minor modification, within the relationship between the doctors and new actors. Similarly, bloggers develop a cooperative relationship and common framework with dominant media actors to access mainstream channels and more readers (Grafstrom & Windell, 2012). They are thus integrated into the mainstream media as new subordinate actors with access to the field resources under the control of dominant actors. As a result, social stability, together with established media framework, embedded within the existing unequal relationships between dominant and subordinate media actors, is maintained through the same relationships, which assimilate new actors and survive the integration.

Reproductive relationships and associated work of maintenance can be facilitated by the dominant framework's adaptability (Zilber, 2009). The framework needs to be translated into local circumstances while still institutionally coherent. If the framework is adaptable enough to address subordinate actors' local contingencies and daily problems, consensual relationships between dominant and subordinate actors and, thus, the framework itself can be maintained. Otherwise, subordinate actors need to radically deviate from the framework to solve their problems, ending up with a conflicting relationship with dominant actors and disruptive work.

The work enabled by consensual relationships between dominant and subordinate actors can be characterized as creation when there are major changes in or additions to dominant meanings and positions, which are still achieved through some connections to those meanings and positions (Creed, 2003; Ritvala & Granqvist, 2009; Creed, Dejordy, & Lok, 2010; Tracey, Phillips, & Jarvis, 2011; Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012; Daudigeos, 2013). With creation, the basis of social stability is expanded as new roles and relationships with new meanings are added to and transform the existing dominant framework. In fact, this refers to a new social stability with newly normalized and stabilized relationships. GLBT ministers, for example, need to create solutions, which can be accepted by individual church authorities, to overcome the problems associated with their marginalized positions (Creed, Dejordy, & Lok, 2010). Hence, they develop a common understanding and consensual relationship with the authorities based on the traditional framework of inclusion. This understanding with associated relationship helps legitimate homosexuality within denominations, partially transforming the heterosexual character of the church. Social stability between the actors is reestablished on an enlarged ground, with both heterosexuality and homosexuality normalized and stabilized within the new dominant framework. Hence, the common reference to the inclusion framework helps partially transform another dominant framework, heterosexuality, by changing relationships between the dominant and subordinate actors from conflict to consensus.

The existence of different dominant meanings, then, creates an opportunity for creation work as new meanings can be justified and integrated with reference to some, supportive, dominant meanings (Ritvala & Granqvist, 2009; Tracey, Phillips, & Jarvis, 2011; Empson, Cleaver, & Allen, 2013). Subordinate actors are less embedded within dominant meanings but more situated within local circumstances and problems and, thus, more likely to develop creative contextual solutions. They can exploit the existence of multiple frameworks to relate their solutions to the meanings of some dominant actors and build supportive relationships with those actors (Tracey, Phillips, & Jarvis, 2011; Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012). Subordinate actors can also be enabled by their bridging positions to engage in relationships with different powerful actors in favor of their own, institutionally new, meanings (Ritvala & Granqvist, 2009; Daudigeos, 2013). This is the case when local individual scientists reframe their findings in terms of those of some established researchers in different areas to be accepted as scientific (Ritvala & Granqvist, 2009) and when occupational safety and health professionals form connections with different powerful actors in the construction field to legitimate new practices (Daudigeos, 2013). Hence, the multiplicity of dominant frameworks facilitates the emergence of a creative relationship between different dominant actors and subordinate actors who are already enabled by exposure to local contingencies and by bridging positions and who relate new situated, local meanings to the meanings of those dominant actors.

To a certain extent, NASA had a multiplicity of frameworks even though schedule orientation dominated in general. Safety orientation could become a strong alternative only in the wake of the disasters. In fact, there was more or less agreement between, as well as among, the managers and nonmanagerial employees including engineers and other technical staff as to the importance of meeting the deadlines. The past success of NASA fed and helped maintain the cultural traits and practices emphasizing future achievements and deadlines with groundless optimism. Hence, a common, stable culture of complacency across different hierarchical levels emerged and created deference to authority on the part of engineers and technical staff when the deadlines were highlighted. This culture often led to ignorance of safety issues, accumulating problems to the point of disasters. In contrast to this relationship of maintenance, a creative relationship between the dominant and subordinate groups of actors also emerged, following the disasters. In NASA, there were also engineers and other operational staff with safety-oriented perspectives and critical professional views. This staff was denied a voice within formal organizational channels. The presidential commission set up after the Challenger disaster gave an opportunity to these staff to raise their concerns, communicate critical views, and connect directly to the government actors, another dominant group in the field, on the basis of the common safety framework. With the involvement of this powerful group of government actors supporting the same framework, safety could become an equally important focus like flight schedules at least for a while. A new hybrid framework and stability based on both safety and flight schedules was created after the disaster, although it could not survive long enough to prevent the second disaster.

DISCUSSION

In the last section, the study's contributions to the institutional work literature and possible areas for further research are mentioned. Moreover, the multiplicity of meaning frameworks and the rigidity/flexibility of frameworks, which facilitate the emergence of different types of relationships between individual actors and, thus, of institutional work, are discussed. Some managerial implications are then highlighted. Lastly, the study's limitations are noted.

Contributions for theory and research

The main contribution of this study is to provide a relational model to analyze and predict the direction of institutional work. The past research implies that relationships between individual actors actually shape institutional work (Zilber, 2002; Symon et al., 2008; Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009; Dacin, Munir, & Tracey, 2010; Tracey, Phillips, & Jarvis, 2011; Whittle, Suhomlinova, & Mueller, 2011; Daudigeos, 2013; Empson, Cleaver, & Allen, 2013). However, the research falls short of an explicit, systematic analysis, which identifies different relationships and their work implications. Rather, structural factors including power positions (e.g., Creed, 2003) and meaning frameworks (e.g., Van Dijk et al., 2011) are emphasized as the direct, independent determinants of institutional work and thus the link between the relationships and institutional work is obscured. This study explicitly situates institutional work within the context of the relationships and points out the interaction between the positions and meanings of the actors (Zilber, 2002, 2009; Rao & Kenney, 2008; Symon et al., 2008; Currie et al., 2012; McCann et al., 2013), which leads to six types of relationships with different work implications. The actors' power positions, which might be dominant or subordinate in relation to those of other actors, and meaning frameworks, which might diverge from or converge with those of other actors, enable and constrain the actors to form a particular type of conflict- or consensus-based relationship with those other actors, and this relationship gives the associated institutional work a particular form. In other words, individual actors empowered by their relative positions and guided by their relative meanings engage in institutionally creative, reproductive, or disruptive relationships with

other actors, in which the relative power or the common meanings of the actors are emphasized. The positions provide the actors with different degrees of power, whereas the meanings provide a direction for their power within the relationships. Institutional work is shaped by those relationships characterized mainly by conflict or consensus. Thus, this study highlights that institutional work is a relational rather than structural or individual phenomenon. Institutional work takes shape through relationships between different actors rather than through the power position, meaning framework, or individual motivation of a single actor.

The study confirms and extends Lawrence's (2008) arguments on power and institutional work in two respects. First, Lawrence (2008: 189) argues that resistance is often neglected in institutional studies. The past research emphasizes subordinate actors' successful change attempts without analyzing their resistance to established actors and frameworks. This study provides a perspective to account for the role of resistance in institutional work. It shows the interaction between 'the multiplicity of institutions' (Lawrence, 2008: 189) and the resistance attempts of subordinate actors with alternative institutional meanings (Creed, 2003; Creed, Dejorjy, & Lok, 2010). Besides, the study elaborates on the role of control/resistance relationships for institutional work. It highlights that resistance in a relationship can be reproductive as well as disruptive and creative, depending on whether the meanings of dominant or subordinate actors represent operational productivity (Creed, 2003; Currie et al., 2012; Heaphy, 2013).

Second, Lawrence (2008) points out that institutional maintenance is also relatively missing in the past research. Lawrence (2008: 190) emphasizes specifically 'the institutional janitors and mechanics.' These are nonelite actors who reproduce institutions through their daily work and relationships. This study demonstrates the role of those nonelite subordinate actors in institutional maintenance as they develop common meanings and consensus-based relationships with other subordinate and dominant actors (Grafstrom & Windell, 2012; McCann et al., 2013). This is the case specifically when a flexible dominant framework allows subordinate actors' reinterpretations to address daily contingencies (Zilber, 2009). Moreover, the study explains how maintenance work is shaped by conflict-based relationships between the actors when there are multiple operationally productive dominant frameworks (Zilber, 2002; Currie et al., 2012). The study also contextualizes maintenance within the relationships in general, implying that nonelite or elite actors maintain institutions not by individual efforts but by ongoing relationships.

The study also confirms that creation work is possible only when dominant actors and frameworks are involved in the relationship (Ritvala & Granqvist, 2009; Tracey, Phillips, & Jarvis, 2011; Van Dijk et al., 2011; Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012; Daudigeos, 2013). Subordinate actors are often a source of novel ideas and meanings owing to their relatively low degree of embeddedness and exposure to unique, local contingencies, and sometimes personal problems (Creed, Dejorjy, & Lok, 2010; Tracey, Phillips, & Jarvis, 2011; Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012). However, they do not have the resources to conclusively establish a new framework as dominant, and they need to relate their framework to existing dominant meanings to involve dominant actors for support. They need to develop relationships with dominant actors on a common basis of understanding (Creed, Dejorjy, & Lok, 2010). Hence, an emerging relationship of conflict between subordinate and dominant actors, owing to the former's deviations from the dominant framework, has to be transformed into a relationship of consensus; creation is achieved with this consensus although initiated by conflict and with a disruptive relationship. Accordingly, this study proposes that creation work needs to be analyzed with a focus on relationships between subordinate and dominant actors when creative ideas are originated from the former.

The study further confirms that the existence of alternative meanings facilitates the formation of different types of relationships between the actors and, thus, of institutional work (Zilber, 2002; Grafstrom & Windell, 2012). For example, a relationship of disruption might occur between different

dominant actors holding alternative frameworks and performing different roles in order to protect their institutional positions (Zilber, 2002). Moreover, dominant actors with similar meanings might counter an alternative framework by consolidating their meanings and practices within a defensive in-group relationship of maintenance (Currie et al., 2012). In addition, subordinate actors might relate novel meanings and practices to existing alternative meanings supported by some dominant actors, thus, engaging in a creative relationship with those actors and a disruptive relationship with others supporting different meanings (Tracey, Phillips, & Jarvis, 2011; Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012). Hence, the study indicates that a more complex picture of institutional work can be developed with more attention to institutional settings with multiple, varied meanings and associated relationships (Lefsrud & Meyer, 2012; Malsch & Gendron, 2013).

The study demonstrates as well that the codification of meaning frameworks into explicit rules or expert knowledge helps develop creative, reproductive, or disruptive relationships (Lefsrud & Meyer, 2012; Empson, Cleaver, & Allen, 2013; Heaphy, 2013; Malsch & Gendron, 2013). Such codification increases comprehension of and convergence toward a particular framework among different actors. Hence, the actors are relatively enabled to adopt and use the framework in relationship building, the resulting relationships might actually help establish the framework as dominant, disrupt other existing frameworks in the field, or simply contribute to the maintenance of the framework by diffusion. Like a rule-based rigid framework, a flexible framework as well might facilitate the development of institutionally formative relationships between individual actors (Feldman, 2000; Feldman & Pentland, 2003; Zilber, 2009). Subordinate actors can easily translate a flexible dominant framework into their daily routines without damaging its coherence. Thus, they can develop a consensual relationship with dominant actors as well as within their own group, which helps maintain the framework. Thanks to flexibility again, subordinate actors' deviations might go beyond the limits of the dominant framework, whereas the actors respond to changing daily conditions, as a result, new productive meanings can be developed. To the extent that new meanings are denied integration, a disruptive relationship between subordinate and dominant actors is likely. When subordinate actors are able to relate new meanings to the interests and meanings of dominant actors, a creative relationship might emerge. Thus, this study implies that more research is needed to analyze the conditions, under which rigid or flexible meaning frameworks pave the way for different types of relationships and institutional work.

Implications for management practice

In terms of managerial practice, the study confirms that individual actors need to connect to powerful, dominant actors in an institutional field to institutionalize new norms, roles, and practices (Ritvala & Granqvist, 2009; Tracey, Phillips, & Jarvis, 2011; Van Dijk et al., 2011; Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012; Daudigeos, 2013). Therefore, managers should create feedback mechanisms for lower-level employees to share their daily experiences and solutions, which might improve operational effectiveness. Moreover, creating an organizational culture that can accommodate different meanings as well as deviations from established practices and routines might help develop consensual relationships between individual actors at subordinate or dominant positions (Tracey, Phillips, & Jarvis, 2011; Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012). With these relationships, novel, productive practices can be rather easily integrated into the culture. At the same time, managers have to ensure that there is a general institutional framework, flexible yet coherent, commonly accepted and followed at the subordinate level (Zilber, 2009). Otherwise, operations will be under the continuous threat of disruptive relationships between lower-level subordinate actors. Managers can also be proactive to form bridging positions with legitimacy in the eyes of different powerful groups in their field and organizations (Daudigeos, 2013). Such positions will accelerate the rate of integration of new, useful practices into the routines of the field and individual organizations.

Limitations

This study suggests that relationships between the actors can be characterized mainly by conflict or consensus. In other words, the study focuses on those relationships in which the relative power or common meanings of the actors are emphasized. Yet, there might be hybrid relationships, in which conflict or consensus orientation is not clear as the meanings of the actors might be different in certain respects and similar in other respects. The nature of institutional work might be shaped by the relative degree of conflict and consensus orientations in those relationships. Such hybrid relationships are not addressed in this study not to complicate the proposed model; however, they might provide a research opportunity to expand the analysis on and further contribute to relational institutional work.

Another limitation concerns the role of other structural factors in the emergence of relationships and institutional work. For simplicity, this study focuses on two particular factors, which are power positions and meaning frameworks. Still, there might be other factors including professional roles (Chreim, Williams, & Hinings, 2007), performance structures (Townley, 1997), socialization processes (Covaleski, Dirsmith, Heian, & Samuel, 1998), organizational routines (Feldman & Pentland, 2003), and the nature of work (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999), which might interact and result in institutionally creative, reproductive, or disruptive relationships. Particular institutional contexts might emphasize the effect of some of these factors and not others on the emergence of those relationships and associated institutional work. This study, thus, notes other structural factors as another research area to enhance relational perspectives on institutional work.

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