gun over there / Telling me I've got to beware." Eerily foreboding.

"Say It Loud (I'm Black and I'm Proud)." By James Brown. "*Now we demand a chance to do things for ourself / We're tired of beatin' our head against the wall and workin' for someone else.*" A Black Power anthem by the Godfather of Soul.

"Respect." Performed by Aretha Franklin. By Otis Redding. "*I ain't gonna do you wrong while you're gone / Ain't gonna do you wrong 'cause I don't wanna / All I'm askin' is for a little respect when you come home.*" The personal is political.

"Redemption Song." By Bob Marley. "*Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery / None but ourselves can free our minds.*" Marley's "Get Up, Stand Up" is also a contender.

"Imagine." By John Lennon. "*Imagine no possessions / I wonder if you can / No need for greed or hunger / A brotherhood of man.*" Lennon as utopian socialist.

"Fight the Power." By Public Enemy. "*Got to give us what we want / Gotta give us what we need / Our freedom of speech is freedom or death / We got to fight the powers that be.*" An exuberant hip-hop call to arms.

Part VI

How Are Movements Organized?

Introduction

Forty years ago, social movements were thought to be extremely disorganized affairs. Individuals were believed to drift into them for personal rather than political reasons; crowds were thought to be irrational and shifting in their focus, hence easily manipulated by demagogues. This is why movements were categorized as a form of "collective behavior," which implies less purpose and intention than the term collective "action." If politics occurred outside normal institutional channels such as parties and voting, then it was thought not to have any form of organization at all.

Perhaps the biggest breakthrough in the field of social movements beginning in the late 1960s was to show that social movements are thoroughly organized, both formally and informally. The informal organization consists of social networks through which individuals are recruited: it turns out they are not isolated and alienated but well integrated into society (see part III). Networks like these also shape what movements can do once they emerge. On the formal dimension, movements usually create, even consist of, formal organizations, which are often legal entities recognized by the state. This section examines these formal organizations (usually dubbed "SMOs" for social movement organizations) and the way they are related to each other in a social movement.

SMOs vary enormously. Some have a great deal of formal structure and rules, while others have nothing but informal traditions and habits. Some are centralized and hierarchical, others decentralized and egalitarian. Some require a lot of money to function and survive, while others subsist on nothing more than the hours contributed by volunteers. They also differ in their sources of funding: some get grants from philanthropic foundations, others from broad direct-mail efforts; members themselves support some, governments actually support others. There are great differences as well in the commitment required of members. For revolutionary cells, protest is a full-time job that usually entails cutting ties with non-members. Other protest groups require nothing more than a Saturday afternoon every few months—or even just an occasional contribution (many SMOs have different kinds of members, ranging from financial supporters to those who volunteer their labor, to full-time staff).

Most of the "new" social movements that began to emerge in the 1960s, including student movements, the New Left, and later environmental, feminist, and antinuclear movements, thought it important to avoid bureaucratic organizations. They preferred egalitarian groups that encouraged everyone to participate in decisionmaking. Joyce Rothschild and Allen Whitt (1986) described these alternative organizations as avoiding the traditional trappings of bureaucracy: paid staff, experts, hierarchy, impersonal rules, and a permanent division of labor. In other words, organizational forms are one area in which many protestors have tried to change the way their societies do things, in anticipation of the kind of future they envision (Breines 1982; Polletta 2002). One of the purposes of avoiding traditional bureaucracy is to foster "free spaces" in which creative alternatives to mainstream practices can be imagined, discussed, and tried out (Evans and Boyte 1986).

Social movements also vary in how many component organizations they have, and in how these are related to each other. At one extreme there may be a single organization that directs the movement, as with some revolutionary movements. At the other there may be many organizations with little coordination among them: each may be reassured by the existence of others but have little direct need for them. Most movements fall somewhere between these extremes. No matter how many SMOs they contain, movements still vary in the degree of coordination among them. Gerlach and Hine (1970) once described social movements as segmented, polycephalous, and reticulate: each group is relatively autonomous from the others, there is no definite head, and yet they have loose links among the parts.

John McCarthy and Mayer Zald, in a famous article excerpted in this section (1977), looked at social movement organizations as though they were like business firms in a market. If an SMO is like a firm, then a movement is like an industry. The important implication is that SMOs may have to compete with each other over the same volunteers and contributors, even when they are in the same movement and thus have the same goals. The economic metaphor focuses our attention on the financing of SMOs, including the many different kinds of relationships they can have with contributors—who are not necessarily the beneficiaries. Paid staff, the "entrepreneurs" who put SMOs together, are crucial. This emphasis on resources helped create the "resource mobilization" approach to social movements. Their approach seems to work well in understanding moderate, well-behaved groups, such as mainstream environmental organizations, that employ professional staffs and raise most of their funds through direct-mail solicitations.

Another tradition of research, exemplified by Charles Tilly (1978), used political rather than economic metaphors to understand social movement organizations. Research on labor unions and other groups that pursued economic and political benefits at the same time helped inspire what has come to be called the "political process" school. Researchers in this tradition view protest groups as being like political parties, except operating outside the electoral system. SMOs are a normal part of politics, whatever form they take. They are instrumental vehicles for the pursuit of group interests.

Indigenous Organization In order to sustain protest, people need to communicate with one another, strategize, advertise, recruit new protestors, and generally coordinate their activities. It often helps, accordingly, if would-be protestors already belong to the same (or linked) political or social organizations, churches, friendship networks, schools, sports clubs, work places, neighborhoods, and so on. Sometimes entire organizations or networks are recruited into a movement, a process known as **bloc recruitment**. If such "indigenous organization" (sometimes called **mobilizing structures**), whether formal or informal, does not already exist, would-be protestors have to create their own protest organizations. Self-organization or self-recruitment to movements, in other words, is sometimes as important as pre-existing organization. These connections are helpful not only for coordinating action and spreading information, but also for building affective ties and loyalties.

The weakness of these traditions emphasizing formal organizations was to depict protestors as invariably self-interested and indeed selfish. Having rejected the psychology of older traditions, these scholars inadvertently embedded the assumptions of neoclassical economics in their models: people were rational pursuers of their own narrow interests. These scholars ignored one of the central issues of social movements: how people come to perceive a shared grievance or interest, especially in something remote from their daily lives, such as global warming, nuclear energy, or human rights abuses in distant lands. There are many emotional and cognitive processes that go into the construction of movement goals. We can't lose sight of what people want from their protest organizations.

Participatory Democracy In the early 1960s, the New Left promoted what it called participatory democracy (sometimes called "direct democracy"), as opposed to the regular channels of representative democracy. Instead of voting for those who would make the ultimate decisions, a basic goal was to allow people to make decisions directly. Participatory democracy was meant to involve everyone in discussions of an issue before voting on it as a group. Better yet, a consensus might emerge so that a formal vote would not be necessary. Needless to say, this approach, popular with social movements of the 1960s through the 1980s and beyond, works best with small groups, and no one has yet quite figured out how to extend the principle to national decisionmaking or link it to traditional representative democracy. Critics have pointed to the seemingly endless discussions it entails in practice, as well as to the possibility that golden-tongued informal leaders can dominate a group without the accountability they would face if they were formal leaders. Participatory democracy reveals some of the core values of the New Left, especially the idea that individuals should control the world around them by making decisions about issues that directly shape their lives.

We can go further. Organizations themselves are more than instruments for attaining goals. They also carry symbolic messages in their very structures. Protestors want to attain their goals, to be sure, but they also want to show that they are certain kinds of people (e.g., compassionate, objective, outraged, maybe even dangerous). With certain kinds of organizational forms, they can show they mean business, or that they are radically different from existing organizations. A school of thought called the "new institutionalism" has arisen in organizational theory to show that organizational structures are never simply the most efficient means to given ends, but also reflect their surrounding cultures' assumptions about the world. An organization's structure often reflects cultural fads popular at the time of its founding.

Elisabeth Clemens, in an article excerpted below, applies this school of thought to social movement organizations. Focusing on women's groups, she suggests that marginalized populations typically adapt culturally familiar forms of organization (e.g., clubs, unions, parliaments, even armies) for political purposes. The "repertoire" or models of organization available to a population shape the ways in which it may organize itself for collective action. When choosing a model from this organizational repertoire, moreover, normative considerations are typically more important than efficiency.

The excerpt by Paul Wapner argues that many movements, including the environmental and human rights movements, increasingly organize across national boundaries. Transnational forms of organization, of course, make sense in an increasingly integrated world. Many contemporary social problems simply cannot be addressed at a national level. In this sense, transnational organization is a response to "globalization." Transnational environmental activist groups (TEAGs, as Wapner calls them) pressure governments, but they do much more than this. They have been instrumental in disseminating an ecological sensibility to new groups, pressuring multinational corporations, and empowering local communities. Thus, they are an important component of an emerging "world civic politics" or "global civil society" that is independent of national states.

Jackie Smith, in the final excerpt in this section, describes the complex transnational network of activists and organizations that has mobilized in recent years for "global justice" or for what Smith calls "democratic globalization." Smith sees this network as a potentially powerful tool that allows people to act effectively beyond their local and even national communities. The formation and coordination of the global justice movement, which some have called a "movement of movements," has been facilitated by technological changes, including the Internet. Smith shows that the number of transnational social movement organizations (TSMOs) has increased dramatically in recent years, even as these have adopted decentralized forms of organization. In fact, paradoxically, as movements have taken on global issues, many have drawn upon small-scale, face-to-face forms of organization, including the "affinity group." Affinity groups are small, semi-independent groups of like-minded activists (they may live in the same neighborhood or have similar political or aesthetic tastes) which typically coordinate their actions with other, similar affinity groups. The affinity-group model of organization has some similarities with anarchism, including a distaste for all forms of hierarchy. Coalitions based on affinity groups typically display a great deal of tactical flexibility, but they are inherently more difficult to direct and control than more centralized forms of organization.

There have been debates over the effects of formal organization on social movements. William Gamson (1990) found that social movements with more-bureaucratic organizations were more successful. They are certainly likely to survive longer, as the point of rules and formality is to persist. However, Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward (1979), looking at a number of poor people's movements, argued that the most powerful tool of the oppressed is their ability to disrupt things. Bureaucratic organization usually interferes with this, as bureaucrats begin to develop an interest in maintaining the organization and their own positions and status, even if this means ignoring or suppressing the demands of the organization's rank and file. This debate continues.

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways do SMOs differ from each other?
2. When would SMOs have an advantage in being formal, when informal? When hierarchical, when egalitarian?
3. What are some of the symbolic messages that SMOs might wish to convey through their formal structures? To whom?
4. If you joined a movement, what type of organization would you find appealing? What would turn you off?
5. In what ways is transnational or cross-border organizing easier than it might have been, say, one hundred years ago? What are some of the difficulties involved in organizing a transnational movement?
6. What are the advantages of the affinity-group model of organization? What are its disadvantages?

---

19 Social Movement Organizations

John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald

For quite some time a hiatus existed in the study of social movements in the United States. In the course of activism leaders of movements here and abroad attempted to enunciate general principles concerning movement tactics and strategy and the dilemmas that arise in overcoming hostile environments. Such leaders as Mao, Lenin, Saul Alinsky, and Martin Luther King attempted in turn to develop principles and guidelines for action. The theories of activists stress problems of mobilization, the manufacture of discontent, tactical choices, and the infrastructure of society and movements necessary for success. At the same time sociologists, with their emphasis upon structural strain, generalized belief, and deprivation, largely have ignored the ongoing problems and strategic dilemmas of social movements.

Recently a number of social scientists have begun to articulate an approach to social movements, here called the resource mobilization approach, which begins to take seriously many of the questions that have concerned social movement leaders and practical theorists. Without attempting to produce handbooks for social change (or its suppression), the new approach deals in general terms with the dynamics and tactics of social movement growth, decline, and change. As such, it provides a corrective to the practical theorists, who naturally are most concerned with justifying their own tactical choices, and it also adds realism, power, and depth to the truncated research on and analysis of social movements offered by many social scientists.

The resource mobilization approach emphasizes both societal support and constraint of social movement phenomena. It examines the variety of resources that must be mobilized, the linkages of social movements to other groups, the dependence of movements upon external support for success, and the tactics used by authorities to control or incorporate movements. The shift in emphasis is evident in much of the work published recently in this area (J. Wilson 1973; Tilly 1973, 1975; Tilly, Tilly, and Tilly 1975; Gamson 1975; Oberschall 1973; Lipsky 1968; Downs 1972; McCarthy and Zald 1973). The new approach depends more upon political, sociological, and economic theories than upon the social psychology of collective behavior.

This paper presents a set of concepts and propositions that articulate the resource mobilization approach. It is a partial theory because it takes as given, as constants, certain components of a complete theory. The propositions are heavily based upon the American case, so that the impact of societal differences in development and political structure on social movements is unexplored, as are differences in levels and types of mass communication. Further, we rely heavily upon case material concerning organizations of the left, ignoring, for the most part, organizations of the right.

The main body of the paper defines our central concepts and presents illustrative hypotheses about the social movement sector (SMS), social movement industries (SMI), and social movement organizations (SMO).