

SOCI 360

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND COMMUNITY CHANGE

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Social Movement Studies

Chronologically, we see the following trend in the sociological and psychological study of social movements *(see p.3, text)*.

- Pre-1970s Collective Behavior Theory (CB)
- Pre-1970s Relative Deprivation Theory (RD)
- Post-1970s Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT)
- Post-1970s Political Process Theory (PPT)
- Post-1970s New Social Movements Theory (NSM)
- Post-1980s Framing and Cultural Theory (Framing)
- Post-2001 Contentious Politics (CP)

Each theory rests typically on a foundation of **Economic, Political or Cultural (E-P-C)** explanations (though typically not exclusively).



Types of Social Movements:

Instrumental (material) vs. Expressive (emotional)

Reform Movements: Seek limited changes to the social system. [Instrumental] (examples: [BLM](#), [Labor](#), [Women's Suffrage](#) movements)

Revolutionary Movements: Seek to change the entire social structure/system. [Instrumental] (example: [Boogaloo Bois](#))

Alternative/New Age Movements: Communal Movements that seek social change by transforming the individual values/lifestyle of its members in sheltered communities. [Expressive] (example: [Rainbow Gathering](#))

Conservative/New Right Movements: Seek to maintain traditional values and protect society from changes that are seen as dangerous or immoral. [Instrumental] (example: [Tea Party Movement](#))

Resistance/Reactionary Movements: Seek to return society to an earlier period that is viewed as more desirable, or movements that attempt to resist progressive social changes in society. [Instrumental] (ex: [Alt-Right](#))

Expressive Movements: Seek to enhance the self-perceptions of its members, focusing on issues of identity-pride, group esteem, and re-claiming a stigmatizing labeling. [Expressive] (example: [LGBT](#))

Cultural Revival Movements: Seek to revive and protect cultural traditions that are in decline, cultural traditions that are key to the group's identity. [Expressive] (examples: [MAGA](#), [Ku Klux Klan](#))

Redemptive / Religious Revival Movements: seek personal and social transformation through religious revivals/social crusades. [Expressive] (examples: [Abolition](#), [Temperance](#) movements)

Key American Social Movements

- | | |
|---|--|
| American Indian Movement (AIM) | Gun Control Movement |
| Animal Rights Movement (PETA) | Gun Rights Movement (a la N.R.A.) |
| Anti-Abortion Movement | Homeless Rights Movements |
| Anti-Apartheid Movement | Housing Rights Movements (Affordable Housing Movement) |
| Anti-Busing Movement | Human Rights Movement |
| Anti-Drinking and Driving Movement (MADD) | Immigrant Rights Movement (Immigration Rights) |
| Anti-Globalization Movement | Jubilee Movement |
| Anti-Gun Control Movement (N.R.A) | Labor Rights Movement / Anti-Labor Union Movement |
| Anti-Nuclear Weapon Movement | Marijuana / Drugs Legalization Movement |
| Anti-Pornography Movement | Mythopoetic Men's Movement |
| Anti-War Movement | New Right Movement |
| Anti-Smoking Movement | Prisoner Rights Movement |
| Anti-Tax Movement / Tea Party Movement | Pro-Choice (Abortion Rights) Movement |
| Black Power Movement | Sex Workers Rights Movement (C.O.Y.O.T.E) |
| Buy Nothing Day Movement (Anti-Overconsumption Movement) | Public Education Reform Movement |
| Civil Rights Movements | Women's Health Movement ('Our Bodies, Ourselves') |
| Disability Rights Movement | Religious Movements (Promise Keepers, Moral Majority) |
| Equal Rights Amendment Movement | Slow Food Movement |
| Equal Marriage Rights Movement (Gay Marriage Rights) | Suffrage Movement |
| Environmental Movement (i.e., Green Peace, Global Warming Movement) | Slut Walk Movement (Anti-Rape Movement) |
| Farmer Workers Movement | Temperance Movement |
| Feminist Movement | Utopian Movement (Communal Living Movement) |
| Free Speech Movement | Vegan/Vegetarian Movement (i.e., PETA, Environmental Movement, etc.) |
| Gay Rights Movement | Welfare Rights Movement |
| | White Power Movement |
| | Zero Population Growth Movement |

Regardless of the movement type, we want a theory that best explains social movements generally. We can start with:

COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR:

Characteristics:

1. Represent the actions of groups of people, not individuals.
2. May mark the beginnings of more organized social behavior.
3. Exhibit patterned behavior, not the irrational behavior of crazed individuals.
4. Usually appear to be highly emotional, even volatile.
5. Are often associated with efforts to achieve social change.

B. Early Theories of Collective Behavior

“Social Contagion Theory”

Sociologically, contagion theory embraces most closely the **theory of symbolic-interaction**, or the idea that society (and social movements) can be explained as a product of our co-mingling using common expressions of purpose and meaning to satisfy material and emotional needs.



B. Early Theories of Collective Behavior

Social Contagion Theory (Locher Chp 2)

Gustav LeBon, “The Crowd...”, 1895

- i. Trying to explain the violence of the **French Revolution**;
- ii. **Crowds diminish free-will**; all members of a crowd are diminished in their reasoning capacities to the least intelligent, roughest, and most violent.
- iii. Individuals feel **invincible and anonymous**; **suggestibility reigns**
- iv. **Critique**: overly literal view of contagion, not scientific, eschews free-will



B. Early Theories of Collective Behavior

Social Contagion Theory (symbolic interaction)

Robert Park, “The Crowd and the Public” (1904), “Intro to Sociology” (1921)

- i. **Emergent interaction**: more attuned to others; circular reaction occurs, spreading contagion
- ii. **First to define “collective behavior”** (but vaguely)
- iii. **Crowd members act irrationally**
- iv. **Park contributes** more to an understanding of the *social nature* of crowd formation.

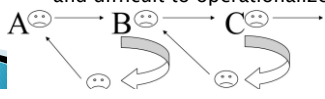


B. Early Theories of Collective Behavior

Herbert Blumer, "The Field of Collective Behavior", 1951

Begins "Relative Deprivation Theory"
 (symbolic interaction: Robert Park's student)

- i. "Interpretive interaction" important for role and behavior
- ii. *Milling, collective excitement and social contagion* are three processes by which individual rationality is compromised
- iii. Similar to "framing perspective"
- iv. Critique: definitions can be vague and difficult to operationalize (measure)



Blumer's Relative Deprivation Approach

- ▶ **Relative deprivation:** a conscious feeling of negative discrepancy between legitimate expectations and present actualities
- ▶ Before discontent is channeled into a social movement, people must feel they:
 - Have a right to their goals
 - Perceive they cannot attain goals through conventional means

Stages in the career of a social movement	Mechanisms by which the development occurs
1. Social Unrest	Agitation
2. Popular Excitement	Development of Esprit de Corps
3. Formalization	Development of Group Morale
4. Institutionalization	Development of Ideology and Tactics