

SOCI 360

**SOCIAL
MOVEMENTS
AND
COMMUNITY
CHANGE**

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**Social Movements:
One Definition**

McAdam and Snow define a social movement as:

“a collectivity acting with some degree of organization and continuity either within or outside of institutional channels for the purpose of promoting or resisting change in the group, society, or world order of which it is a part.”

Adapted from Doug McAdam and David A. Snow, *Social Movements: Readings on Their Emergence, Mobilization, and Dynamics*, 1997, p. xvii



On Socio-Institutional Change

- ▶ Social movements generally seek to address the root problems of society and change institutions accordingly.
- ▶ As institutions change, our lives may be materially disrupted, for better or for worse. This involves inherently **ECONOMIC** effects of social movements.
- ▶ No one has the same definition of what the root problems of society and its institutions actually are. Therefore, social movements are inherently **POLITICAL**.
- ▶ Change in social institutions means change in social norms: therefore, social movements are inherently **CULTURAL** movements.
E - P - C



Social Movements: Definitions of Key Concepts

Three general elements define social movements:

1) **Motivation**

Why do people collectively protest? What are the social and psychological reasons behind collective movements?

2) **Organization**

How do movements become collective? Are actors rational? How do groups and networks of protest emerge from individual discontent? What is the leadership structure?

3) **Transformation**

What is the role of the social movements in creating social change? Why do some movements succeed and others fail? How long are movements generally around and what happens to them?

Social Movements: Definitions of Key Concepts Types of Social Movements

Sociologist David Aberle thought about four different types:

		Degree of Change?	
		Partial	Total
Who is Changed?	Specific Individuals	Alterative Social Movement (MADD, Recycling)	Redemptive Social Movement (AA, Moomies)
	Everyone (Systemic Change)	Reformative Social Movement (Suffrage, NOW)	Revolutionary (Transformative) Social Movement (Civil Rights, Communism)

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)
- Post-1970s Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT)
- Post-1970s Political Process Theory (PPT)
- Post-1970s New Social Movements Theory (NSM)
- 1980s-1990s Framing and Cultural Theory (Framing)
- Post-2001 Contentious Politics (CP)

The theoretical establishment of each area is predicated on the more fundamental sociological theories of **Functionalism, Conflict and Symbolic-Interaction** theories of human society.

“COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR”

A branch of social-psychology



General Characteristics:

1. Represent the actions of groups of people, not individuals, most often deemed to be deviant.
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.

Early Theories of Collective Behavior

1. Social Contagion Theory (Locher Chp 2)

Gustav LeBon, “The Crowd...”, 1895 (p12)



- i. Trying to explain the violence of the **French Revolution**; (p12-13)
- ii. **Crowds diminish free-will**; all members of a crowd are diminished in their reasoning capacities to the least intelligent, roughest, and most violent. (p13)
- iii. Individuals feel **invincible and anonymous; suggestibility reigns** (p14)
- iv. **Critique**: overly literal view of contagion, not scientific, eschews free-will

Early Theories of Collective Behavior

2. Social Contagion Theory (symbolic interaction)

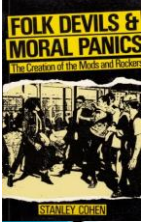
Robert Park, “The Crowd and the Public”, 1904 (p16)



- i. **Emergent interaction**: more attuned to others; circular reaction occurs, spreading contagion (p16)
- ii. **First to define “collective behavior”** (but vaguely) (p17)
- iii. **Crowd members act irrationally** (p17)
- iv. **Park contributes** more to an understanding of the *social nature* of crowd formation. (p18)

Early Theories of Collective Behavior

3. Social Contagion Theory (symbolic interaction) Stanley Cohen, "Folk Devils and Moral Panics", 1972 (np)



- i. "Folk Devils" are deviants stigmatized by the those who are believed to threaten the social order (np)
- ii. Moral Entrepreneurs may arise to point out the existence of "folk devils" (often erroneously) (p17)
- iii. Moral Panics are a form of collective behavior acting in response to the combination of perceived folk devils in our midst and moral entrepreneurs encouraging others to act. (np)

Recent Examples of Moral Panics

Early Theories of Collective Behavior

What spurs people in Collective Behavior?

- 1) Relative Deprivation Theory (symbolic interaction)
Herbert Blumer, 1951
- 2) Value-Added Theory (functionalist)
Neil Smelser, 1962
- 3) Emergent Norm Theory (symbolic interaction)
Turner and Killian, 1957
- 4) Mass Society Theory (social conflict)
William Kornhauser, 1959

Early Theories of Collective Behavior

Relative Deprivation Theory (symbolic interaction) Herbert Blumer, "The Field of Collective Behavior", 1951 (p19)

- i. "Interpretive interaction" important to role and behavior (p19)
- ii. *Milling, collective excitement, and social contagion* are three processes by which individual rationality is compromised (p19)
- iii. Similar to "framing perspective"
- iv. Critique: definitions can be vague and difficult to operationalize (p21)

Early Theories of Collective Behavior

Structural Strain/Value-Added Theory (structural functionalism)

Neil Smelser, "Theory of Collective Behavior"
(1962) (p.30)

- i. Structural strains are social problems;
- ii. Generalized beliefs lead to collective behavior due to structural malfunction (p.33)
- iii. Value-added model (structural conduciveness, strain, beliefs, precipitating factors, mobilization, social control) (p.34)
- iv. Critique: Does not theorize the complex way beliefs come to be shaped by interpretation and definition (p.37)

Value-Added Theory (Smelser): Six Determinants of Collective Behavior

Structural conduciveness	• The opportunities, or lack of them, afforded by the social structure of society e.g. democracies are more conducive to collective behaviour than authoritarian regimes.
Structural strain	• Breakdown in the ability of society to meet needs and expectations, meaning that 'strains' arise in different parts of the social structure.
Growth and spread of generalized beliefs	• Development of shared beliefs about the situation, e.g. why it is happening, who is to blame, what can be done.
Precipitating factors	• Trigger events, catalysts that enable people to attach their grievances to a concrete cause.
Mobilization of participants for action	• Organizational capacities of the group, including leaders, communication channels, money and other resources.
Operation of social control	• Ability of authorities, police and media to exercise social control (e.g. by public pressure or physical force).

Value-Added Theory (Smelser): Determinants of Collective Behavior

- If one wants to:
- ▶ **C**hange the
 - +
 - ▶ **S**ocial
 - +
 - ▶ **B**ody
 - + then one must:
 - ▶ **(P)**rotest
 - + and
 - ▶ **M**arch
 - +
 - ▶ **C**onstantly

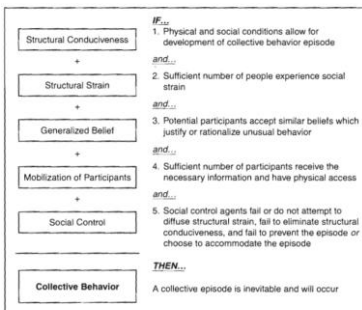


Figure 4.1 The development of Collective Behavior from the Value-Added Perspective



Durkheim's "Anomic Theory"

and its "Mass Society" and "Collective Behavior" Variants

- a. For society to experience order, all of its subparts must be healthy or functional. All of its parts must be well-integrated.
- b. For Durkheim, social movements are a symptom of social disintegration, or anomic disruption (the condition of *normative breakdown*).
- c. The most reliable signs of societal anomie are increases in social deviance, crime, suicide, and social movements.

Early Theories of Collective Behavior

Emergent Norm Theory (symbolic interaction)

Turner & Killian, 1957 (Locher p24)

- i. Maintains "rational" actors;
- ii. Confusing situations are left open to interpretation
- iii. People take their cues from others (*reference groups*) around them (*conformity* creates collective behavior)
- iv. Critique: too "psychological"; no connection to larger social processes, such as resource availability or politics (p37)

Emergent Norm Theory: 6 Conditions

- ▶ According to Turner and Killian, six conditions are necessary to exist in the mindset and behavior of the social activist for collective behavior to occur:
 - **1) Uncertainty** (about expected behavior)
 - **2) Urgency** (something must be done *soon*)
 - **3) Communication** (of mood and imagery within crowd)
 - **4) Constraint** (conformity to the new crowd norms)
 - **5) Suggestibility** (individual acceptance of crowd attitude)
 - **6) Permissiveness** (normally inhibited behavior is permitted in the crowd)

Emergent Norm Theory: Types of Activist

▶ According to Turner and Killian, there are five types of collective behavior personalities:

- 1) The Ego-involved/Committed
- 2) The Concerned
- 3) Insecure
- 4) Spectators
- 5) The Ego-detached/Exploiter

(see Locher p.33 for descriptions)



Democracy and Global Social Change

Shaeffer- Global Social Change...

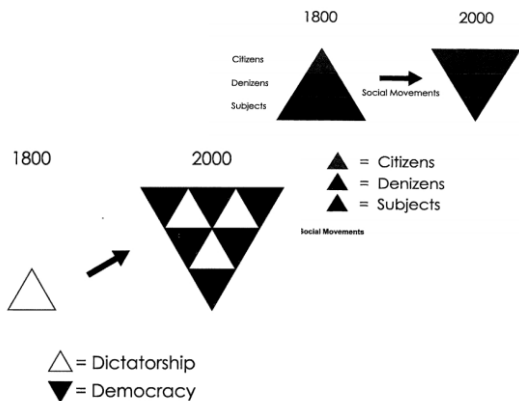
▶ 1.a. Over the past 250 years, liberal democracies led to the establishment of a larger proportion of citizens in the new republics, and fewer subjects (Schaeffer 2013, p. 6-9).



- Citizen = a legally recognized subject of a state or commonwealth, with attendant rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- Denizen = an inhabitant or occupant of a particular place (second-class citizen: not fully legally represented or exposed to stigma/profiling).
- Subject = a person brought under the control or jurisdiction of the state, typically by using force. Few to no rights and under full authority of the state.

▶ Unfortunately, as more people have become citizens in the democratic republics, basic social inequality has also increased.





The Rise and Democratization of the Republics

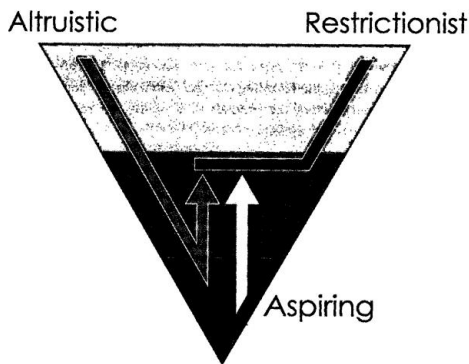
Democracy and Global Social Change

- ▶ 1.b. Social change is a function of social movements which arise as citizens, denizens, and subjects attempt to gain greater rights and freedoms, or attempt to protect the status quo (Schaeffer, 2013).



- ▶ Three types of movements address change:
 - **Aspirational:** actors (usually subjects or denizens) see change as necessary to remediate inequality; example: *BLM*
 - **Altruistic:** relatively more powerful citizens attempt to aid aspirational actors; example: *Celebrity support of BLM*
 - **Restrictionist:** actors attempt to bolster the (often unequal) status quo; example: *White Nationalist Movements (3%ers, Oathkeepers)*



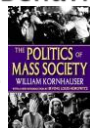


Types of Social Movements

Early Theories of Collective Behavior

Mass Society Theory (social conflict)

William Kornhauser, "Politics of Mass Society", 1959 (p15)



- Developed by members of the "Frankfurt School" of Sociology (Germany) to explain the turn to totalitarianism in early 20th c. Europe.
- "Massification" requires *social marginalization* (alienation from social norms of work, family, politics, etc.).
- Leads to populism and identity politics rather than democratic politics.
- Related to Durkheim's anomic disruption theory; also promoted by Hannah Arendt, Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, others (known as *Critical Theorists* in sociology, all part of the Frankfurt School).
- Critiques* suggest that marginalized people are NOT more likely to join social movements



Umberto Eco: Fourteen features of fascism

(New York Review of Books, 1996; via Kottke.org)

Characteristics of "Eternal Fascism":



1. "The first feature of Ur-Fascism is the **cult of tradition.**"
2. "Traditionalism implies the **rejection of modernism**" (or rejection of science).
3. "Irrationalism also depends on the cult of **action for action's sake**" – don't think; act!
4. "For Ur-Fascism, **disagreement is treason.**"
5. "**Appeal against the intruders.**"
6. "**Appeal to a frustrated middle class.**"
7. "At the root of Ur-Fascist psychology there is the **obsession with a plot.**"
8. "A sense of humiliation by the '**ostentatious wealth and force of their enemies.**'"
9. Eternal struggle – "**life is permanent warfare.**"
10. "Belief in the **superiority of one people over another.**"
11. "**Everybody is educated to become a hero.**"
12. "Both **disdain for women and intolerance of homosexuality.**"
13. "**The harnessing of 'selective populism'**" and disdain for "**rotten parliamentary governments.**"
14. An "**impoverished vocabulary, and an elementary syntax,** in order to limit the instruments for complex and critical reasoning."

How does Trumpism synchronize with Eco's description of fascism?
