The Social Movements Reader
Cases and Concepts

Third Edition

Edited by Jeff Goodwin and James M Jasper

WILEY Blackwell

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Cover image: Riot police block protesters trying to march to National Assembly, Seoul, 2003.
Photo © Kim Kyung-Hoon / Reuters.

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Editors' Introduction

Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper

People have complained about the things they dislike throughout history. Sometimes they do more than complain; they band together with others to change things. In modern societies, more than ever before, people have organized themselves to pursue a dizzying array of goals. There are the strikes, pickets, and rallies of the labor movement, aimed at higher wages and union recognition, but also at political goals. In the early nineteenth century the Luddites broke into early British factories and smashed new "labor-saving" machines. There have been dozens of revolutions like those in France, Russia, China, Cuba, and Iran. The women's movement has tried to change family life and gender relations as well as the economic opportunities of women. We have seen Earth Day and organizations like the Union of Concerned Scientists and the Natural Resources Defense Council. Animal rights activists have broken into labs and "liberated" experimental animals. There have been plenty of conservative and right-wing movements as well, from Americans opposed to immigrants in the 1840s to those who fought federally mandated busing in the 1970s to those who have bombed abortion clinics in more recent years.

Some of these movements have looked for opportunities to claim new rights, while others have responded to threats or violence. Some have sought political and economic emancipation and gains, while others have promoted (or fought) lifestyle choices they liked (or feared). Some have created formal organizations, others have relied on informal networks, and still others have engaged in more spontaneous actions such as riots. Movements have regularly had to choose between violent and nonviolent activities, illegal and legal ones, disruption and persuasion, extremism and moderation, reform and revolution. *Social movements are conscious, concerted, and sustained efforts by ordinary people to change some aspect of their society by using extra-institutional means.* Movements are more conscious and organized than fads and fashions. They last longer than a single protest or riot. There is more to them than formal organizations, although such organizations usually play a part. They are composed mainly

> **Political or Social Protest** Protest refers to the act of challenging, resisting, or making demands upon authorities, powerholders, and/or cultural beliefs and practices by some individual or group.

of ordinary people as opposed to economic elites, army officers, or politicians. They need not be explicitly political, but many are. They are protesting against something, either explicitly as in antiwar movements or implicitly as in the back-to-the-land movement which is disgusted with modern urban and suburban life.

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Why study social movements? First, you might be interested in understanding them for their own sake, as a common and dramatic part of the world around you. You might simply wish to better understand protestors and their points of view, perhaps especially when they seem to want things that to you seem undesirable. Why do some people think animals have rights, or others that the United Nations is part of a sinister conspiracy? Understanding social movements is a good way to comprehend the human condition and human diversity.

But there are other reasons for studying social movements, which are windows onto a number of aspects of social life. You might study social movements if you are interested in politics, as movements are a main source of political conflict and, sometimes, change. They are often the first to articulate *new* political issues and ideas, including new visions of a better world. As people become attuned to a social problem they want solved, they typically form some kind of movement to push for a solution. Established political parties and their leaders are rarely asking the most interesting questions, or raising new issues; bureaucracy sets in, and politicians spend their time in routine tasks. It is typically movements outside the political system that force insiders to recognize new fears and desires.

You might also study social movements because you are interested in human action more generally, or in social theory. Scholars of social movements ask why and how people do the things they do, especially *why* they do things *together*: this is also the question that drives sociology in general, especially social theory. Social movements raise the famous Hobbesian problem of social order: why do people cooperate with each other when they might get as many or more benefits by acting selfishly or alone? The study of social movements makes the question more manageable: if we can see why people will voluntarily cooperate in social movements, we can understand why they cooperate in general. Political action is a paradigm of social action that sheds light on action in other spheres of life. It gets to the heart of human motivation. For example, do people act to maximize their material interests? Do they act out rituals that express their beliefs about the world, or simply reaffirm their place in that world? What is the balance between symbolic and "instrumental" (goal-oriented) action? Between selfish and altruistic action?

> **Social Movement**   A social movement is a collective, organized, sustained, and noninstitutional challenge to authorities, powerholders, or cultural beliefs and practices.
> A **revolutionary movement** is a social movement that seeks, at minimum, to overthrow the government or state, and perhaps to change the economy and key institutions of the entire society.

You will also benefit from the study of social movements if you are interested in social change. This might be a theoretical interest in why change occurs, or it might be a practical interest in encouraging or preventing change. Social movements are certainly one central source of social transformation. Other sources include those formal organizations, especially corporations, that are out to make a profit: they invent new technologies that change our ways of working and interacting. Corporations are always finding new ways of extracting profits from workers, and inventing new products to market. These changes typically disrupt people's ways of life: a new machine makes people work harder, or toxic wastes have to be disposed of near a school. People react to these changes, and resist them, by forming social movements.

But, while formal organizations are the main source of technical change, they are rarely a source of change in values or in social arrangements. Why? In modern societies with tightly knit political and economic systems, the big bureaucracies demand economic and political control; they prize stability.

So they try to routinize everything in order to prevent the unexpected. They resist changes in property relations, for example, which are one of the key components of capitalism.

So innovation in values and political beliefs often arises from the discussions and efforts of social movements. Why don't societies just endlessly reproduce themselves intact? It is often social movements that develop new ways of seeing society and new ways of directing it. They are a central part of what has been called "civil society" or the "public sphere," in which groups and individuals debate their own futures.

If you have a *practical* interest in spreading democracy or changing society, there are tricks to learn—techniques of organizing, mobilizing, and influencing the media. There have been a lot of social movements around for the last 40 years, and people in those movements have accumulated a lot of know-how about how to run movements. This is not the main focus of this reader, but we hope there are a few practical lessons to be learned from it.

Finally, you might want to study social movements if you have an interest in the moral basis of society. Social movements are a bit like art: they are efforts to express values and sensibilities that have not yet been well articulated, that journalists haven't yet written about, that lawmakers have not yet addressed. We all have moral sensibilities—including unspoken intuitions as well as articulated principles and rules—that guide our action, or at least make us uneasy when they are violated. Social movements are good ways to understand these moral sensibilities.

Social movements play a crucial role in contemporary societies. We learn about the world around us through them. They encourage us to figure out how we feel about government policies, social trends, and new technologies. In some cases, they even inspire the invention of new technologies or new ways of using old technologies. Most of all, they are one means by which we work out our moral visions, transforming vague intuitions into principles and political demands.

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Research on social movements has changed enormously over time. Until the 1960s, most scholars who studied social movements were frightened of them. They saw them as dangerous mobs who acted irrationally, as slaves to their emotions, blindly following demagogues who had sprung up in their midst. In the nineteenth century, the crowds that attracted the most attention were those that periodically appeared in the cities of Europe demanding better conditions for workers, the right to vote, and other rights that we now take for granted. Most elites, including university professors, had little sympathy for them. Crowds were thought to whip up emotions that made people do things they would not otherwise do, would not want to do, and should not do. They transformed people into unthinking automatons, according to scholars of the time. The last hurrah of this line of thinking was in the 1950s, as scholars analyzed the Nazis in the same way as they had crowds: as people who were fooled by their leaders, whom they followed blindly and stupidly. For more than 100 years, most scholars feared political action outside of normal institutionalized channels.

These attitudes changed in the 1960s when, for one of the first times in history, large numbers of privileged people (those in college and with college educations) had considerable sympathy for the efforts of those at the bottom of society to demand freedoms and material improvements. The civil rights movement was the main reason views changed, as Americans outside the South learned of the repressive conditions Southern blacks faced. It was hard to dismiss civil rights demonstrators as misguided, immature, or irrational. As a result, scholars began to see aspects of social movements they had overlooked when they had used the lens of an angry mob. There were several conceptual changes or "turns" made in social movement theories.

First was an economic turn. In 1965 an economist named Mancur Olson wrote a book, *The Logic of Collective Action*, in which he asked when and why individuals would protest if they were purely rational, in the sense of carefully weighing the costs and benefits of their choices. Although Olson portrayed people as overly individualistic (caring only about the costs and benefits to themselves individually, not to broader groups), he at least recognized that rational people could engage in protest. Within a few years, John McCarthy and Mayer Zald worked out another economic vision of protest,

taking formal organizations as the core of social movements and showing that these social movement organizations (SMOs, for short) act a lot like business firms: they try to accumulate resources, hire staff whose interests might diverge from constituents', and "sell" their point of view to potential contributors. SMOs even compete against one another for contributions; together they add up to a *social movement industry*. Because of their emphasis on SMOs' mobilization of time and money, they came to be known as resource mobilization theorists. Just as Olson saw individuals as rational, so McCarthy and Zald saw organizations as rational. Protestors were no longer dismissed as silly or dangerous.

Around the same time, scholars also discovered the explicitly political dimension of social movements. Most older social movements, like the labor or the civil rights movements, were making demands directly to elites or the state. Foremost were claims for new rights, especially voting rights but also the right to unionize in elections recognized by the government. Thus the state was involved not only as the target but also as the adjudicator of grievances. In this view, which came to be known as *political process theory*, social movements were also seen as eminently rational; indeed, they were normal politics that used extra-institutional means. As in the economic models of mobilization theories, protestors were seen as normal people pursuing their interests as best they could. By highlighting social movements' interactions with the state, these process theories have focused on conflict and the external environments of social movements, to the extent that they even explain the emergence of social movements as resulting from "opportunities" provided by the state (such as a lessening of repression or a division between economic and political elites).

In the late 1980s, yet another dimension of social movements came to be appreciated: their cultural side. Whereas the economic and political turns had both featured protestors as straightforwardly rational and instrumental, scholars now saw the work that goes into creating symbols, convincing people that they have grievances, and establishing a feeling of solidarity among participants.

Two cultural components of movements have been studied more than others. One is the process by which organizers "frame" or publicly present their issues in a way that resonates with or makes sense to potential recruits and the broader public. The other is the *collective identity* that organizers can either use or create to arouse interest in and loyalty to their cause. Most fortunate are those activists who can politicize an existing identity, as when black college students in the South around 1960 began to feel as though it was up to them to lead the civil rights movement into a more militant phase. Other activists may try to create an identity based on membership in the movement itself, as socialists have done since the nineteenth century.

Recently scholars have begun to recognize and study even more aspects of social movements. For example, many movements have a global reach, tying together protest groups across many countries or establishing international organizations. The environmental movement and the protest against the World Trade Organization and the unregulated globalization of trade are examples. Yet most of our models still assume a national movement interacting with a single national state.

The emotions of protest are also being rediscovered. A variety of complex emotions accompany all social life, but they are especially clear in social movements. Organizers must arouse anger and outrage and compassion, often by playing on fears and anxieties. Sometimes these fears and anxieties need to be mitigated before people will protest. Typically, organizers must also offer certain joys and excitements to participants in order to get them to remain in the movement. These represent some of the future directions that research on social movements seems likely to take in coming years.

Our understanding of social movements has grown as these movements themselves have changed. Like everyone else, scholars of social movements are influenced by what they see happening around them. Much protest of the nineteenth century took the form of urban riots, so it was natural to focus on the nature of the crowd. In the 1950s it was important to understand how the Nazis could have taken hold of an otherwise civilized nation, so "mass society" theories were developed to explain this. Scholars who have examined the labor movement and the American civil rights movement recognized that claims of new rights necessarily involve the state, so it was natural for them to focus on the political dimensions of protest. Social scientists who came of age in the 1960s and after were often favorably disposed toward the social movements around them, and so portrayed protestors as reasonable people.

Many of the movements that came after the 1960s were not about rights for oppressed groups, but about lifestyles and cultural meanings, so it was inevitable that scholars would sooner or later turn to this dimension of protest. Likewise, in recent years, several important social movements have become more global in scope. Many movements are also interested in changing our emotional cultures, especially movements influenced by the women's movement, which argued that women were disadvantaged by the ways in which different emotions were thought appropriate for men and for women.

Research on social movements will undoubtedly continue to evolve as social movements themselves evolve.

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Scholars and activists themselves have asked a number of questions about social movements. We have grouped the readings in this volume around eight main questions. Foremost, of course, why do social movements occur, and why do they occur when they do? Who joins and supports them? What determines how long a person stays in a social movement: who stays and who drops out? Also, how are movements organized? And what do they do? In other words, how do they decide what tactics to deploy? How are movements shaped by their interactions with other institutions and groups? For example, how are they affected by the media? And by the state and elites? Why and how do they decline or end? Finally, what changes do movements bring about?

The pages that follow give a variety of answers to each of these questions. The readings gathered here, furthermore, answer these questions by examining a wide range of movements—movements in the United States but also in many other countries, movements of the 1960s but also more recent movements, reformist as well as revolutionary movements, and violent as well as nonviolent movements. No single movement is analyzed in great detail, but we hope this reader will spur students to explore those movements that interest them in greater detail—and to ask the right questions about the movements that are arising now and in the future.

Part II

When and Why Do Social Movements Occur?

Introduction

The most frequently asked question about social movements is why they emerge when they do. Not only does this process come first in time for a movement, but it is also basic in a logical sense as well. Until a movement takes shape, there is not much else we can ask about it. Where we think a movement comes from will color the way we view its other aspects too: its participants, goals, tactics, and outcomes. In general, theories of movement origins have focused either on the characteristics of participants or on conditions in the broader environment which the movement faces. Only in recent years have cultural approaches tried to link these two questions.

Theorists before the 1960s addressed the question of origins to the exclusion of almost all others, for they frequently saw movements as mistakes that were best avoided! For them, the urgent political issue was how to prevent them, and to do this you needed to know why they appeared. *Mass society* theorists, for instance, argued that social movements occurred when a society had lost "intermediary" organizations that discontented individuals could join (Kornhauser 1959). These might be trade unions, community groups, churches—or any other organization that could connect the individual to the government or larger society, aggregating individual preferences and providing outlets for letting off steam. These "regular" organizations were thought to be stable, normal, and healthy, unlike social movements.

Other theorists emphasized the kind of people they thought likely to join movements, which would form when enough people were "alienated" from the world around them, or had infantile psychological needs that absorption in a movement might satisfy (Hoffer 1951). In general, early theorists saw movements as a function of discontent in a society, and they saw discontent as something unusual. Today, scholars see social movements as a normal part of politics, and so these early theories are no longer taken very seriously.

In the 1960s and 1970s, a group of researchers known as the "resource mobilization" school noticed that social movements usually consisted of formal organizations (McCarthy and Zald 1977, excerpted in Chapter 16). And one prerequisite for any organization was a certain level of resources, especially money, to sustain it. They argued that there were always enough discontented people in society to fill

a protest movement, but what varied over time—and so explained the emergence of movements—were the resources available to nourish it. They accordingly focused on how movement leaders raise funds, sometimes by appealing to elites, sometimes through direct-mail fundraising (or, today, the Internet) from thousands of regular citizens. As a society grows wealthier, citizens have more discretionary money to contribute to social movement organizations, and so there are more movements than ever before. With this point of view, the focus shifted decisively away from the kinds of individuals who might join a movement and toward the infrastructure necessary to sustain a movement. Today, scholars still consider resources an important part of any explanation of movement emergence.

The paradigm that has concentrated most on movement emergence is the "political process" approach (Jenkins and Perrow 1977; McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1998). In this view, economic and political shifts occur, usually independently of protestors' own efforts, which open up a space for the movement. Because these scholars perceive movements as primarily political, making demands of the state or elites and asking for changes in laws and policies, they see changes in the state as the most important opportunity a movement needs. Most often, this consists of a slackening in the repression that organizers are otherwise assumed to face, perhaps because political elites are divided (the movement may have found some allies within the government), or because political and economic elites have divergent interests. There may be a general crisis in the government, perhaps as a result of losing a foreign war, that distracts leaders or saps their own resources or legitimacy (Skocpol 1979). In many versions, the same factors are seen as explaining the rise of the movement and its relative success (Kitschelt 1986).

Alongside mobilization and process approaches, a number of scholars have emphasized the social networks through which people are mobilized into social movements. Although networks have been used primarily to explain *who* is recruited (as we will see in Part III), the very existence of social ties between potential recruits is seen as a prerequisite for the emergence of a social movement. If most process theorists emphasize conditions in the external world (especially the state) that allow a movement to emerge, network theorists look at the structural conditions within the community or population of those who might be recruited. Those with "dense" ties, or pre-existing formal organizations, will find it easier to mobilize supporters, and build a movement.

Jo Freeman's article, "The Origins of the Women's Liberation Movement" (excerpted in Chapter 2), was one of the first accounts of a movement to place networks front and center. Freeman was arguing against early theorists who saw discontented and unorganized masses as spontaneously appearing in the streets. (Freeman herself was one of the founders of the younger branch of the movement in Chicago.) She asserts that, if spontaneous uprisings exist at all, they remain small and local unless they have pre-existing organizations and social ties. Those networks are important for communication and vital to the spread of a movement. Like most network theorists, however, Freeman does not discuss the emotions that are the lifeblood of networks: people respond to the information they receive through networks because of affective ties to those in the network. She also admits that organizers can set about building a new network suited to their own purposes, an activity that takes longer than mobilizing or coopting an existing network.

John D'Emilio's account in Chapter 3 of the 1969 Stonewall rebellion in New York City and the subsequent development of a militant gay and lesbian movement also emphasizes the critical importance of social networks. This apparently spontaneous eruption of gay militancy in fact marked the public emergence of a long repressed, covert urban subculture. D'Emilio points out that the movement was also able to draw on pre-existing networks of activists in the radical movements then current among American youth. The gay liberation movement recruited from the ranks of both the New Left and the women's movement. It also borrowed its confrontational tactics from these movements. Many lesbians and gay men, D'Emilio notes, had already been radicalized and educated in the arts of protest by the feminist and antiwar movements.

These structural approaches redefined somewhat the central question of movement emergence. Scholars began to see movements as closely linked to one another, because leaders and participants shifted from one to the other or shared social networks, or because the same political conditions

encouraged many movements to form at the same time. So researchers began to ask what caused entire waves or "cycles" of social movements to emerge, rather than asking about the origins of single movements (Tarrow 1998: ch. 9).

In the cultural approach that has arisen in recent years, not all movements are seen as structurally similar. In one version, movements are linked to broad historical developments, especially the shift from an industrial or manufacturing society to a postindustrial or knowledge society, in which fewer people process physical goods and more deal with symbols and other forms of knowledge (Touraine 1977). Social movements are seen as efforts to control the direction of social change largely by controlling a society's symbols and self-understandings. They do this by shaping or creating their own collective identities as social movements (Melucci 1996).

In cultural approaches, the goals and intentions of protestors are not taken for granted but treated as a puzzle. For instance, the origin of the animal protection movement has been linked to broad changes in sensibilities of the last 200 years that have allowed citizens of the industrial world to recognize the suffering of nonhuman species—and to worry about it (Jasper and Nelkin 1992). Such concerns would simply not have been possible in a society where most people worked on farms and used animals both as living tools (horses, dogs, dairy cows) and as raw materials (food, leather, etc.). The point is to observe or ask protestors themselves about their perceptions and desires and fantasies, without having a theory that predicts in advance what protestors will think and feel. Perceptions are crucial in this view.

So are emotions, which Manuel Castells adds to the mix in the excerpt in Chapter 5 from his book *Networks of Outrage and Hope*, which sums up his definition of social movements. He focuses on the role of the Internet in both stoking outrage and getting people into the streets during the Egyptian uprising of 2011, but he also acknowledges that revolutions are about seizing public space as well. Only by being together in the streets and squares, and especially Tahrir Square, could the movement in Egypt foster the full feelings of excitement and solidarity and collective identity that kept people there. They felt they were making history. Castells also describes the measures the Mubarak government took to shut down the Internet, as well as the clever ways that the Internet community found to keep going. From the very beginning, protest is an ongoing engagement between protestors and the police.

Structural and cultural approaches disagree in part because they have examined different kinds of social movements (on the conflict between these two views, see Goodwin and Jasper 2004). Most process theorists have focused on movements of groups who have been systematically excluded from political power and legal rights— in other words, groups who are demanding the full rights of citizenship. Cultural approaches have been more likely to examine movements of those who already have the formal rights of citizens—who can vote, pressure legislators, run for office—but who nonetheless feel they must step outside normal political channels to have a greater impact (such as the so-called new social movements). In a related difference, structural theorists usually assume that groups of people know what they want already, and merely need an opportunity to go after it; culturalists recognize that in many cases people need to figure out what they want, often because organizers persuade them of it (e.g., that animals can suffer as much as humans, that marijuana is a danger to respectable society, that the U.S. government is the tool of Satan).

Movements almost always emerge unexpectedly, even though they appear inevitable in hindsight. (Alexis de Tocqueville said this of revolutions in the mid-nineteenth century.) The civil rights sit-ins of 1960 (analyzed by Aldon Morris in Chapter 20) spread rapidly across the South, to the surprise of many. Protest exploded in Egypt in January 2011 after years of relative quiescence. And no one predicted the rapid spread of the Occupy movement in the fall of 2011. As Ruth Milkman, Stephanie Luce, and Penny Lewis show in Chapter 4, however, Occupy was not a spontaneous eruption but carefully planned by seasoned activists who were inspired by events in Egypt and elsewhere. Occupy attracted supporters with a wide range of concerns—inequality, money in politics, student debt, labor rights, and so on—by purposely refusing to make formal demands on government or elites and by claiming to be open to virtually everyone ("the 99 percent") except the wealthiest elite ("the 1 percent") in American society.

There are a number of factors to look for in explaining why a movement emerges when and where it does, drawn from all these perspectives: political factors such as divisions between elites and lessened

repression from the police and army; economic conditions such as increased discretionary income, especially among those sympathetic to a movement's cause; organizational conditions such as social network ties or formal organizations among aggrieved populations; demographic conditions such as the increased population density that comes with industrialization (if you live a mile from your nearest neighbor, it is hard to organize collectively); and cultural factors such as moral intuitions or sensibilities that support the movement's cause. Usually, potential protestors must frame and understand many of these factors as opportunities before they can take advantage of them. Slogans, catchphrases, or demands that resonate with widely held beliefs and concerns are almost always necessary to attract large numbers of people.

Culturalists have reasserted the importance of perceptions, ideas, emotions, and grievances, all of which mobilization and process theorists once thought did not matter or could simply be taken for granted. But these are examined today in the context of broader social and political changes, not in isolation from them. It is not as though people develop goals, then decide to go out and form movements to pursue them; there is an interaction between ideas, mobilization, and the broader environment. But some people hold ideas that others do not, so that the question of the origins of a social movement begins to overlap with that of who is recruited to it.

Discussion Questions

1   What were the two branches of the women's movement of the late 1960s and how do they differ?

2   In what ways did the New Left and the women's movement spur the development of the gay liberation movement?

3   How do structural factors like social networks and cultural factors like emotions and meanings work together to create social movements?

4   Who participated in the Occupy movement, and what were their concerns? Why did Occupy occur in 2011 and not earlier?

5   What are the competing sets of factors that might explain popular participation in the Egyptian Revolution of 2011?

6   Why would lots of social movements appear in some periods, and few in others? In other words, why do they cluster together?

2

The Women's Movement

Jo Freeman

The emergence in the last few years of a feminist movement caught most thoughtful observers by surprise. Women had "come a long way," had they not? What could they want to be liberated from? The new movement generated much speculation about the sources of female discontent and why it was articulated at this particular time. But these speculators usually asked the wrong questions. Most attempts to analyze the sources of social strain have had to conclude with Ferriss (1971, p. 1) that, "from the close perspective of 1970, events of the past decade provide evidence of no compelling cause of the rise of the new feminist movement." His examination of time-series data over the previous 20 years did not reveal any significant changes in socioeconomic variables which could account for the emergence of a women's movement at the time it was created. From such strain indicators, one could surmise that any time in the last two decades was as conducive as any other to movement formation.

[…]

An investigation into a movement's origins must be concerned with the microstructural preconditions for the emergence of such a movement center. From where do the people come who make up the initial, organizing cadre of a movement? How do they come together, and how do they come to share a similar view of the world in circumstances which compel them to political action? In what ways does the nature of the original center affect the future development of the movement?

Most movements have very inconspicuous beginnings. The significant elements of their origins are usually forgotten or distorted by the time a trained observer seeks to trace them out, making retroactive analyses difficult. Thus, a detailed investigation of a single movement at the time it is forming can add much to what little is known about movement origins. Such an examination cannot uncover all of the conditions and ingredients of movement formation, but it can aptly illustrate both weaknesses in the theoretical literature and new directions for research. During the formative period of the women's liberation movement, I had many opportunities to observe, log, and interview most of the principals involved

in the early movement. The descriptive material below is based on that data. This analysis, supplemented by five other origin studies made by me, would support the following three propositions:

Proposition 1: The need for a preexisting communications network or infrastructure within the social base of a movement is a primary prerequisite for "spontaneous" activity. Masses alone don't form movements, however discontented they may be. Groups of previously unorganized individuals may spontaneously form into small local associations—usually along the lines of informal social networks—in response to a specific strain or crisis, but, if they are not linked in some manner, the protest does not become generalized: it remains a local irritant or dissolves completely. If a movement is to spread rapidly, the communications network must already exist. If only the rudiments of one exist, movement formation requires a high input of "organizing" activity.

Proposition 2: Not just any communications network will do. It must be a network that is *co-optable* to the new ideas of the incipient movement. To be co-optable, it must be composed of like-minded people whose background, experiences, or location in the social structure make them receptive to the ideas of a specific new movement.

Proposition 3: Given the existence of a co-optable communications network, or at least the rudimentary development of a potential one, and a situation of strain, one or more precipitants are required. Here, two distinct patterns emerge that often overlap. In one, a crisis galvanizes the network into spontaneous action in a new direction. In the other, one or more persons begin organizing a new organization or disseminating a new idea. For spontaneous action to occur, the communications network must be well formed or the initial protest will not survive the incipient stage. If it is not well formed, organizing efforts must occur; that is, one or more persons must specifically attempt to construct a movement. To be successful, organizers must be skilled and must have a fertile field in which to work. If no communications network already exists, there must at least be emerging spontaneous groups which are acutely attuned to the issue, albeit uncoordinated. To sum up, if a co-optable communications network is already established, a crisis is all that is necessary to galvanize it. If it is rudimentary, an organizing cadre of one or more persons is necessary. Such a cadre is superfluous if the former conditions fully exist, but it is essential if they do not.

Before examining these propositions in detail, let us look at the structure and origins of the women's liberation movement.

The women's liberation movement manifests itself in an almost infinite variety of groups, styles, and organizations. Yet, this diversity has sprung from only two distinct origins whose numerous offspring remain clustered largely around these two sources. The two branches are often called "reform" and "radical," or, as the sole authoritative book on the movement describes them, "women's rights" and "women's liberation" (Hole and Levine 1971). Unfortunately, these terms actually tell us very little, since feminists do not fit into the traditional Left/Right spectrum. In fact, if an ideological typography were possible, it would show minimal consistency with any other characteristic. Structure and style rather than ideology more accurately differentiate the two branches, and, even here, there has been much borrowing on both sides.

I prefer simpler designations: the first of the branches will be referred to as the older branch of the movement, partly because it began first and partly because the median age of its activists is higher. It contains numerous organizations, including the lobbyist group (Women's Equity Action League), a legal foundation (Human Rights for Women), over 20 caucuses in professional organizations, and separate organizations of women in the professions and other occupations. Its most prominent "core group" is the National Organization for Women (NOW), which was also the first to be formed.

While the written programs and aims of the older branch span a wide spectrum, their activities tend to be concentrated on legal and economic problems. These groups are primarily made up of women—and men—who work, and they are substantially concerned with the problems of working women. The style of organization of the older branch tends to be traditionally formal, with elected officers, boards of directors, bylaws, and the other trappings of democratic procedure. All started as top-down national organizations, lacking in a mass base. Some have subsequently

A Chronology of the U.S. Women's Movement

1961: President Kennedy forms President's Commission on the Status of Women, chaired by Esther Peterson and Eleanor Roosevelt; only 3.6 percent of law students are women

1963: Betty Friedan's book, *The Feminine Mystique*, becomes a best-seller; the Equal Pay Act is signed into law

1964: The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is signed into law; Title VII of the Act bars sex discrimination in employment; Mary King and Casey Hayden write a paper decrying the treatment of women in the Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee (SNCC)

1965: The U.S. Supreme Court, in *Griswold v. Connecticut*, bans laws that prohibit the use of, or the dissemination of information about, birth control; King and Hayden's paper on "Sex and Caste" is circulated widely (and published in the journal *Liberation* in 1966)

1966: National Organization of Women (NOW) founded with Betty Friedan as president

1967: Women's consciousness-raising (CR) groups formed in Berkeley and elsewhere; CR groups proliferate, especially during 1968 and 1969

1968: Protests are staged against the Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City; Shirley Chisholm becomes the first African-American woman elected to Congress; women are hissed and thrown out of a convention of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) for demanding a women's liberation plank in the group's platform

1969: Feminist activists disrupt Senate hearings on the birth control pill for excluding testimony about its dangerous side-effects

1970: Tens of thousands participate in the Women's Equality March in New York City; much feminist work is published, including Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*, Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex*, *The Black Woman*, edited by Toni Cade Bambara, and *Sisterhood is Powerful*, edited by Robin Morgan; the Feminist Press is founded; Rita Mae Brown spurs the "Lavender Menace" protest in favor of including lesbian rights as part of the women's movement; lesbian feminist CR groups proliferate during 1970 and 1971; the U.S. House passes the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA); four states, including New York, pass liberal abortion laws

1971: The first courses in women's history and literature are offered at many colleges; the National Women's Political Caucus is founded by Bella Abzug, Shirley Chisholm, Betty Friedan, and Gloria Steinem, among others

1972: Title IX of the 1972 education bill prohibits sex discrimination in educational programs (including sports programs) that receive federal assistance; 12 percent of law students are now women; Shirley Chisholm runs for the Democratic nomination for president; the first rape crisis and battered women's shelters open; *Ms*. magazine begins publishing

1973: Supreme Court, in *Roe v. Wade*, eliminates restrictions on first-trimester abortions; the National Black Feminist Organization is formed

1974: The Equal Opportunity Act forbids discrimination on the basis of sex or marital status; the Coalition of Labor Union Women is founded; the Combahee River Collective of Black Women begins meeting in Boston; eleven women are ordained as Episcopal priests in violation of church law

1978: The first "Take Back the Night March" is held in Boston

1979: The Moral Majority is founded by Rev. Jerry Falwell, opposing the ERA, abortion, and gay rights

Early 1980s: The women's movement is divided over the issue of pornography

1982: The ERA is defeated, falling three states short of the 38 needed for ratification

developed a mass base, some have not yet done so, and others do not want to.

Conversely, the younger branch consists of innumerable small groups—engaged in a variety of activities—whose contact with each other is, at best, tenuous. Contrary to popular myth, it did not begin on the campus nor was it started by the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). However, its activators were, to be trite, on the other side of the generation gap. While few were

Social Networks The web of social ties
that connects individuals (and organizations)
to others is often referred to as a social
network. An individual's network typically
includes friends, relatives, neighbors, and
co-workers. One's ideas and attitudes are
typically strongly influenced and reinforced
by one's social network, and scholars have
emphasized how recruitment to movements
often occurs through network ties. (Finding a
job typically depends on one's network ties,
too. Friends of friends turn out to be espe-
cially important for job-seekers.) Movements,
then, are often built upon pre-existing net-
works, although they also bring together
previously unconnected networks and or-
ganizations. The individuals who bring
together such networks are sometimes
called **brokers**.

students, all were "under 30" and had received
their political education as participants or con-
cerned observers of the social action projects of
the last decade. Many came direct from New Left
and civil rights organizations. Others had
attended various courses on women in the multi-
tude of free universities springing up around the
country during those years.

The expansion of these groups has appeared
more amoebic than organized, because the
younger branch of the movement prides itself
on its lack of organization. From its radical
roots, it inherited the idea that structures were
always conservative and confining, and leaders,
isolated and elitist. Thus, eschewing structure
and damning the idea of leadership, it has car-
ried the concept of "everyone doing her own
thing" to the point where communication is
haphazard and coordination is almost nonexist-
ent. The thousands of sister chapters around the
country are virtually independent of each other,
linked only by numerous underground papers,
journals, newsletters, and cross-country travel-
ers. A national conference was held over
Thanksgiving in 1968 but, although considered
successful, has not yet been repeated. Before the
1968 conference, the movement did not have the
sense of national unity which emerged after the
conference. Since then, young feminists have

made no attempt to call another national confer-
ence. There have been a few regional confer-
ences, but no permanent consequences resulted.
At most, some cities have a coordinating com-
mittee which attempts to maintain communica-
tion among local groups and to channel
newcomers into appropriate ones, but these
committees have no power over any group's
activities, let alone its ideas. Even local activists
do not know how big the movement is in their
own city. While it cannot be said to have no
organization at all, this branch of the movement
has informally adopted a general policy of
"structurelessness."

Despite a lack of a formal policy encouraging
it, there is a great deal of homogeneity within
the younger branch of the movement. Like the
older branch, it tends to be predominantly
white, middle class, and college educated. But it
is much more homogenous and, unlike the older
branch, has been unable to diversify. This is
largely because most small groups tend to form
among friendship networks. Most groups have
no requirements for membership (other than
female sex), no dues, no written and agreed-
upon structure, and no elected leaders. Because
of this lack of structure, it is often easier for an
individual to form a new group than to find and
join an older one. This encourages group forma-
tion but discourages individual diversification.
Even contacts among groups tend to be along
friendship lines.

In general, the different style and organization
of the two branches was largely derived from the
different kinds of political education and experi-
ences of each group of women. Women of the
older branch were trained in and had used
the traditional forms of political action, while the
younger branch has inherited the loose, flexible,
person-oriented attitude of the youth and student
movements. The different structures that have
evolved from these two distinctly different kinds
of experience have, in turn, largely determined
the strategy of the two branches, irrespective of
any conscious intentions of their participants.
These different structures and strategies have
each posed different problems and possibilities.
Intramovement differences are often perceived by
the participants as conflicting, but it is their
essential complementarity which has been one of
the strengths of the movement.

Despite the multitude of differences, there are very strong similarities in the way the two branches came into being. These similarities serve to illuminate some of the microsociological factors involved in movement formation. The forces which led to NOW's formation were first set in motion in 1961 when President Kennedy established the President's Commission on the Status of Women at the behest of Esther Peterson, to be chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt. Operating under a broad mandate, its 1963 report (*American Women*) and subsequent committee publications documented just how thoroughly women are still denied many rights and opportunities. The most concrete response to the activity of the president's commission was the eventual establishment of 50 state commissions to do similar research on a state level. These commissions were often urged by politically active women and were composed primarily of women. Nonetheless, many believe the main stimulus behind their formation was the alleged view of the governors that the commissions were excellent opportunities to pay political debts without giving women more influential positions.

The activity of the federal and state commissions laid the groundwork for the future movement in three significant ways: (1) it brought together many knowledgeable, politically active women who otherwise would not have worked together around matters of direct concern to women; (2) the investigations unearthed ample evidence of women's unequal status, especially their legal and economic difficulties, in the process convincing many previously uninterested women that something should be done; (3) the reports created a climate of expectations that something would be done. The women of the federal and state commissions who were exposed to these influences exchanged visits, correspondence, and staff and met with each other at an annual commission convention. Thus, they were in a position to share and mutually reinforce their growing awareness and concern over women's issues. These commissions thus created an embryonic communications network among people with similar concerns.

During this time, two other events of significance occurred. The first was the publication of Betty Friedan's (1963) book, *The Feminine Mystique*. An immediate best seller, it stimulated many women to question the status quo and some to suggest to Friedan that a new organization be formed to attack their problems. The second event was the addition of "sex" to Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Many men thought the "sex" provision was a joke. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) certainly treated it as one and refused to adequately enforce it. The first EEOC executive director even stated publicly that the provision was a "fluke" that was "conceived out of wedlock." But, within the EEOC, there was a "pro-woman" coterie which argued that "sex" would be taken more seriously if there were "some sort of NAACP for women" to put pressure on the government. As government employees, they couldn't organize such a group, but they spoke privately with those whom they thought might be able to do so. One who shared their views was Rep. Martha Griffiths of Michigan. She blasted the EEOC's attitude in a June 20, 1966 speech on the House floor declaring that the agency had "started out by casting disrespect and ridicule on the law" but that their "wholly negative attitude had changed—for the worse."

On June 30, 1966, these three strands of incipient feminism were knotted together to form NOW. The occasion was the last day of the Third National Conference of Commissions on the Status of Women, ironically titled "Targets for Action." The participants had all received copies of Rep. Griffiths's remarks. The opportunity came with a refusal by conference officials to bring to the floor a proposed resolution that urged the EEOC to give equal enforcement to the sex provision of Title VII as was given to the race provision. Despite the fact that these state commissions were not federal agencies, officials replied that one government agency could not be allowed to pressure another. The small group of women who had desired the resolution had met the night before in Friedan's hotel room to discuss the possibility of a civil rights organization for women. Not convinced of its need, they chose instead to propose the resolution. When the resolution was vetoed, the women held a whispered conversation over lunch and agreed to form an action organization "to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, assuming all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men." The name NOW was coined by

Friedan, who was at the conference researching her second book. Before the day was over, 28 women paid $5.00 each to join.

By the time the organizing conference was held the following October 29–30, over 300 men and women had become charter members. It is impossible to do a breakdown on the composition of the charter membership, but one of the first officers and board is possible. Such a breakdown accurately reflected NOW's origins. Friedan was president, two former EEOC commissioners were vice-presidents, a representative of the United Auto Workers Women's Committee was secretary-treasurer, and there were seven past and present members of the State Commissions on the Status of Women on the 20-member board. Of the charter members, 126 were Wisconsin residents—and Wisconsin had the most active state commission. Occupationally, the board and officers were primarily from the professions, labor, government, and the communications industry. Of these, only those from labor had any experience in organizing, and they resigned a year later in a dispute over support of the Equal Rights Amendment. Instead of organizational expertise, what the early NOW members had was media experience, and it was here that their early efforts were aimed.

As a result, NOW often gave the impression of being larger than it was. It was highly successful in getting publicity, much less so in bringing about concrete changes or organizing itself. Thus, it was not until 1969, when several national news media simultaneously decided to do major stories on the women's liberation movement, that NOW's membership increased significantly. Even today, there are only 8,000 members, and the chapters are still in an incipient stage of development.

In the meantime, unaware of and unknown to NOW, the EEOC, or to the state commissions, younger women began forming their own movement. Here, too, the groundwork had been laid some years before. Social action projects of recent years had attracted many women, who were quickly shunted into traditional roles and faced with the self-evident contradiction of working in a "freedom movement" without being very free. No single "youth movement" activity or organization is responsible for the younger branch of the women's liberation movement;

together they created a "radical community" in which like-minded people continually interacted with each other. This community consisted largely of those who had participated in one or more of the many protest activities of the sixties and had established its own ethos and its own institutions. Thus, the women in it thought of themselves as "movement people" and had incorporated the adjective "radical" into their personal identities. The values of their radical identity and the style to which they had been trained by their movement participation directed them to approach most problems as political ones which could be solved by organizing. What remained was to translate their individual feelings of "unfreedom" into a collective consciousness. Thus, the radical community provided not only the necessary network of communication; its radical ideas formed the framework of analysis which "explained" the dismal situation in which radical women found themselves.

Papers had been circulated on women, and temporary women's caucuses had been held as early as 1964, when Stokely Carmichael made his infamous remark that "the only position for women in SNCC is prone." But it was not until late 1967 and 1968 that the groups developed a determined, if cautious, continuity and began to consciously expand themselves. At least five groups in five different cities (Chicago, Toronto, Detroit, Seattle, and Gainesville, Florida) formed spontaneously, independent of each other. They came at a very auspicious moment. The year 1967 was the one in which the blacks kicked the whites out of the civil rights movement, student power had been discredited by SDS, and the organized New Left was on the wane. Only draft-resistance activities were on the increase, and this movement more than any other exemplified the social inequities of the sexes. Men could resist the draft; women could only counsel resistance.

What was significant about this point in time was that there was a lack of available opportunities for political work. Some women fit well into the "secondary role" of draft counseling. Many did not. For years, their complaints of unfair treatment had been ignored by movement men with the dictum that those things could wait until after the revolution. Now these movement women found time on their hands, but the men would still not listen.