Social Movements

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http://www.iastate.edu/~soc.134

Building a social movement

- Ideology: members of a social movement share a belief system that justifies their action
  - Social movements attempt to reach people who share their ideology, convert people to their ideology, or manipulate existing ideology for new purposes
- Social networks: people are recruited into social movement activities through friends and relatives
- Resources: key resources include money, people and organizational strength
- Political opportunity structure: some environments are more friendly than others for social movements

Possible consequences of social movements

- Changed social policy
- Changed social attitudes
- New interest organizations
- Biographical change

The meek don’t make it (Gamson 1975)

- Research question: What tactics are best for achieving social movement success?
  - Persuasion: disseminating group’s message
  - Bargaining: offering something (votes, $) in exchange for something else
  - Coercion: creating disturbances or threatening to do so
- Survey of social movements in U.S. history (1800-1945), sampled 53 movements
- Standards for success
  - Acceptance: accepted by antagonist as valid spokesperson
  - New advantages: group achieves the goals it sought

Success of U. S. social movements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acceptance</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Full response (20, 38%)</td>
<td>Preemption (6, 11%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>New advantages</td>
<td>Co-option (5, 9%)</td>
<td>Collapse (22, 42%)</td>
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Full response (38%)

- League of Deliverance (1882): prevent employment of Chinese labor
- American Federation of Labor (1881-1935): labor union, now part of AFL-CIO (11 other labor unions also received full response)
- Federal Suffrage Association (1892-1920): supported federal women’s suffrage
- National Urban League (1910-30): improve living conditions of urban blacks
- American Committee for the Outlawry of War (1921-29): supported Pact of Paris, which made war illegal under international law
- March on Washington Committee (1942): elimination of racial discrimination in employment
Preemption and co-option

Preemption (11%)
- Grand Eight Hour Leagues (1865-72): support of 8-hour day legislation
- American Free Trade League (1869-72): repeal high tariffs
- Tobacco Night Riders (1906-11): break tobacco trust and gain control of tobacco marketing

Co-option (9%)
- Bull Moose Party (Progressives) (1912-16): attempted to elect Teddy Roosevelt
- American Association of University Professors (1914-22): academic freedom and establishment of tenure

Collapse (22%)
- National Female Anti-Slavery Society (1832-40): abolition of slavery (Two other anti-slavery groups also collapsed)
- Social Revolutionary Clubs (1880-87): abolish wage system and private property (Eight other socialist groups also collapsed)
- National Brotherhood of Baseball Players (1885-91): early baseball union
- Brotherhood of the Kingdom (1892-1915): mobilize Christians to improve social conditions
- American Birth Control League (1921-37): greater acceptance of birth control
- German-American Bund (1936-43): U.S. adoption of National Socialism (Nazism)

What tactics work?

- Violence users
  - 8 total: 6 (75%) new advantages, 5 (62%) acceptance
- Nonviolent coercion users
  - 10 total: 8 (80%) new advantages, 5 (50%) acceptance
- Other success-producing factors
  - Thinking small
  - War-time challenges
  - Bureaucracy