


Social Movements



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

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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

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Possible consequences of social movements

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

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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

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Success of U. S. social movements

		Acceptance	
		Yes	No
New advantages	Yes	Full response (20, 38%)	Preemption (6, 11%)
	No	Co-option (5, 9%)	Collapse (22, 42%)

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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

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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

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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)

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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

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