

PS 171a Lecture Slides Sep 30-Nov 17

PS 171a Collective Action and Social Movements

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Bunche 3276, Tuesdays 11am-12noon

From now on, class meets in
Humanities 169

This class is about understanding social movements.

In particular, why do people participate?

We will consider a variety of topics and perspectives.

Historical background

The understanding of social movements, revolutions, large scale social change, etc. goes back to Marx.

Marx's main idea was that as technology (the "means of production") develops, society gets divided into different classes, whose interests conflict.

For example, agrarian technology divides people into landowners and peasants. Industrial technology divides people into capitalists and workers.

Marx on revolutions

Revolutions result from class conflicts.

Revolutions create new forms of society, and the cycle starts again (technology creates new classes, etc.).

Note that according to Marx,

Revolutions, social conflicts, happen “automatically” because of technological change.

There is an emphasis on “economic” classes as opposed to groups based on language, religion, gender, etc.

The explanation is very “macro” in that it focuses on large groups of people and not how individual people decide whether to participate.

There is no distinction made between what a class wants and what an individual member of the class wants.

The spirit of Marx’s work has been influential.

There has been lots of work on “macro” explanations of revolutions which focus on large actors such as states, elites, militaries, etc.

There is this idea that there are “forces of history” which determine what happens.

Another historical influence is early sociological work on crowd behavior (LeBon, Blumer, etc.).

The idea is that when people are in crowds, they act in a way completely different than in ordinary life: “mob mentality” is a different subject than normal behavior.

They act emotionally, irrationally.

Animal analogies are often made (lemmings to the sea, etc.)

There is a strong association between social movements and crowds, emotionality, “rage”.

This older work (Marx, theories of crowd behavior) is basically wrong.

Much of more recent work (since 1980) has been in reaction to it.

Revolutions, social movements, etc. are not "automatic".

They are "contingent": they succeed or fail depending on individual choices.

To understand social change, you have to look at the individuals involved, the "micro" level, not just broad classes of people.

Almost any group of people (not just an economic class) can be a potent social movement.

There is no such thing as "mob mentality."

People in crowds do not behave in a completely different way than in normal life.

Social movements are not emotional or irrational, but usually extremely carefully planned and organized.

The interests of a group and the interests of group members can easily be different.

October 2 Goldstone

Study of revolutions used to focus on the "great revolutions" (French, Russian, Chinese) and was dominated by "structural," "macro" approaches (how international conditions affected revolutions, how economic classes came into conflict).

As more and more cases were considered (Iranian revolution, reform in post-Soviet countries, anti-colonial struggles in Africa, guerilla wars, etc.), the great variety of cases and causes became apparent. Not possible to argue for any one central cause or typical pattern.

What Goldstone calls "fourth generation approach" involves greater attention to:

1. Conscious agency (revolution is not automatic, but results from people's choices)
2. Ideology and culture (not just economic classes, but ethnicity, religion, language, etc., matters)
3. Contingency (things can go wrong, people can make bad choices and mess up)
4. Revolution and social movements (i.e. US civil rights movement) are very similar

3. Formal organization (NOW, SCLC) can be crucial, but is not absolutely necessary.

4. Good leadership is hard and it matters. Success depends on having a variety of leadership abilities (task-oriented vs. people-oriented, "bridge leaders").

5. Gender issues are usually problematic (westernized, educated women in Iranian revolution adopting traditional Islamic dress as a symbol against Western imperialism, but this later became part of their repression).

6. "Micro foundations" (emphasis on looking at individual people's choices and actions) are important.

October 4 Olson

A group is not just any bunch of people, but people who have a "common interest" (labor unions, professional organizations, etc.).

A group doesn't form simply because of a "natural human tendency" or because people are "joiners".

Often a common interest is something everyone benefits from---no one can be "excluded" (lobbying for legislation, clean air, human rights, etc.)

So even though everyone gains from some social change, each individual person has no reason to contribute (because she will get the benefits if everyone else does the work), especially in a large group. Each person will want to "free ride."

Example: Say we have a "money multiplier" machine. For every dollar a person puts into the machine, 5 dollars come out. However, this 5 dollars must be shared among the entire class. Will you put money into the machine?

From a "macro" perspective, everyone in a group gains from some change, so surely the group will succeed.

But from a "micro" perspective, each individual person doesn't want to participate and the group will fail.

In game theory, this is the "prisoners' dilemma," "collective action problem," "free rider problem," "tragedy of the commons."

	Person 2 participates	Person 2 free rides
Person 1 participates	4, 4	-6, 10
Person 1 free rides	10, -6	0, 0

How does an organization "solve" its free rider problem?

1. "Selective incentives" give positive incentives to each individual members. Examples: AMA medical journals, labor unions bargain with employers and don't just lobby, free food, meeting people

2. Coercion: laws which require membership (bar associations), withholding benefits (can't get malpractice insurance if you're not a AMA member), social stigma, guilt, shunning

The point is that for collective action to succeed, a group must solve this "collective action problem" or "free rider problem."

Selective incentives work by adding 7 to the payoff from participating.

	Person 2 participates	Person 2 free rides
Person 1 participates	4, 4	-6, 10
Person 1 free rides	10, -6	0, 0

Selective incentives work by adding 7 to the payoff from participating.

	Person 2 participates	Person 2 free rides
Person 1 participates	11, 11	1, 10
Person 1 free rides	10, 1	0, 0

Coercion works by adding -7 to the payoff from free riding.

	Person 2 participates	Person 2 free rides
Person 1 participates	4, 4	-6, 10
Person 1 free rides	10, -6	0, 0

Coercion works by adding -7 to the payoff from free riding.

	Person 2 participates	Person 2 free rides
Person 1 participates	4, 4	-6, 3
Person 1 free rides	3, -6	-7, -7

October 6 Chong

Many “selective incentives” are things like excitement or gaining the esteem of others, which only exist if the action is successful.

Hence joining a social movement is an “assurance game”: each person needs to be assured that other people will join in.

Another name for this is “coordination problem.”

This is different from the “free rider problem.” In a coordination problem, no one wants to free ride, but still each person will participate only if others do.

A “coordination problem” is a situation in which if everyone participates, everyone gains, but an individual wants to participate only if everyone else does.

People are more likely to join a movement if they think it will be successful.

A successful social movement is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Examples of coordination problems:

I want to revolt against a government, but doing so alone would be very costly (I might get arrested).

If I use free software, I don't have to pay \$100 to Microsoft and I get the same functionality. But everyone else uses Microsoft products, and I need to have compatible file formats.

I want to wear strange brightly colored footwear with holes in them if I know that other people wear them (and thus I look fashionable instead of foolish).



A coordination problem looks like:

	Person 2 participates	Person 2 stays home
Person 1 participates	5, 5	-10, 0
Person 1 stays home	0, -10	0, 0

Implications:

Anything which creates uncertainty about whether other people will participate hurts participation.

The support of community leaders, organizations (even nonpolitical ones), and preexisting social networks is helpful because they give people confidence that many other people will show up.

It is helpful if everyone shares a common understanding of the situation. It helps if everyone knows that everyone else has the same goals.

Historical precedents and traditions can be very helpful (Nikolai Church in Leipzig, East Germany, Sproul Plaza at UC Berkeley).

It's good to "piggyback" on existing crowds (politicized funerals in South Africa, advertising on Super Bowl).

Leaders want to overstate the number of participants (in a demonstration for example) to encourage others to participate.

October 7 Hardin

A "coordination problem" is a situation in which if everyone participates, everyone gains, but an individual wants to participate only if everyone else does.

Example: I want to revolt against a government, but doing so alone would be very costly (I might get arrested).

Example: If I use free software, I don't have to pay \$100 to Microsoft and I get the same functionality. But everyone else uses Microsoft products, and I need to have compatible file formats.

In a coordination problem, there is no free-rider issue (a la Olson): if coordination is achieved, then no one wants to free ride.

In this sense, a coordination problem is "easier" than a free-rider problem (a la Olson). But solving a coordination problem is still hard.

The idea is that this is one of the problems a social movement has to solve in order to succeed. Each person will participate only if enough others participate; how do you get things started?

How do you create a self-fulfilling prophecy?

Another way to think about it: Why do you obey your government?

Partly because of ideals, agreement, but partly because you will get punished if you don't. Why do the people who punish you obey the government? Because they will get punished, etc. It's circular. In the end, each person participates because other people are participating.

There aren't enough guns around to force everyone at gunpoint to obey. Everyone obeys because they choose to obey given that everyone else obeys.

So to change the government, everyone must decide all at once to participate in a new government, in "one big push."

In terms of game theory:

If everyone protests, the regime falls.
But no one wants to protest alone.



	Person 2 protests	Person 2 stays home
Person 1 protests	10, 10	-100, 0
Person 1 stays home	0, -100	0, 0

"Dual coordination" theory: state power rests on coordination among government supporters, and uncoordination among people opposed to it. If all people opposed to it stopped obeying all at the same time, the state would collapse.

Ceausescu example in Romania: Ceausescu called a large demonstration to help cement his authority. In the protection of the crowd, people started yelling that he was a dictator. The crowd joined the chant, and within a week, Ceausescu was executed.

October 9 Johnson, Clarke, Thevenot and Russell

In December 1979 "Who Concert Stampede", there was some "competitive" behavior but much more evidence of "cooperative" behavior: people helping complete strangers, trying to protect people who had fallen down, etc.

For example, among the 38 people considered, 16 observed helping behavior by others, 6 observed both helping and self-interested behavior, and 1 observed only self-interested behavior.

Is this helping behavior surprising?

The standard 1960s theories of "panic behavior" which Johnson references ("acquisitive panics", Smelser's "craze", etc.) basically assume that behavior in a "panic" is a different kind of behavior from behavior in "normal" situations.

For example, it is often assumed that people, once in a crowd, behave irrationally, or because of excitement, emotion, etc., are unable to make decisions which involve moral responsibility. In extreme form, these theories assume that crowd behavior is a completely different kind of social behavior than "normal" behavior.

These theories are classic "fallacies of composition", which assume (for example):

Because a crowd of people does something which seems irrational (horrific, callous, etc.), it must be that individuals themselves must be irrational (horrific, callous, etc.).

Because crowds sometimes do weird and exceptional things, it must be that the people involved are weird and exceptional.

Even the word "panic" confuses the social phenomenon with an assumption about individual behavior.

Being in a crowd does affect your decisions, emotions, etc. In a crowd, you fear getting arrested less (Ceausescu example). But there is little evidence to suggest that people, when in a crowd or "mob", become completely different kinds of people, lose faculties that they normally have, or that cooperative social norms disappear. There is lots of evidence that people, even in very extreme situations (like escaping out of a burning building), remain calm and (perhaps even more) socially helpful.

The 1960s theories of "panic", "mob psychology", "raging animals", "stampede," etc. are now largely discredited by evidence (for example Clark McPhail, "The Myth of the Madding Crowd").

The point of Johnson's article is that the "macro" level explanation (people are barbarians, the corrupting influence of rock and roll, alcohol and drugs, etc.) is not confirmed at the micro level. The micro level analysis reveals processes which are not captured by a broad-brush description (people originally tried to form a cordon around the fallen people so they could get up and not get further crushed, but were unsuccessful because the crowd was pushing, etc.)

Finally, there was no "common definition of the situation": police thought it was like any other rock concert; people near the pileup were shouting to get people to back up; ticket takers did not open the doors even though people were begging them to; people near the pileup were trying to get to the doors not to get better seats but to reach safety; people at the back had no idea anything was happening and thought it was just a normal push for the doors. No single person thought to herself, "I don't mind if people die, I just want to get a good seat."

October 11 Berk

Berk observes a spontaneous antiwar protest at Northwestern University in 1972, in which students set up a barricade blocking traffic in Sheridan Road.

Berk's evidence comes from 12 observers in the crowd, 37 additional interviews after the protest, etc. (direct data-gathering)

Berk finds little evidence of "irrationality," "irresponsibility," "collective emotion" as in traditional "crowd behavior" theories.

Berk does find a great diversity of motivation and opinion about whether a barricade sends the right message, whether it's worth doing, whether destruction of property is important, whether urgent action is necessary, whether it would be better to wait for the student strike, etc. As the barricade was being put up, there were intense arguments and discussions about costs and benefits, not a uniform rush to action or "contagion".

Berk does not find people's thought processes to be "immature" or "simplistic". Berk suggests that scholars and other observers call crowd behavior "irrational" simply to express their disapproval.

More conclusions:

1. The speeches at the rally beforehand seemed to make a difference (the University president's unconvincing speech, the challenge made by seminary students).

2. The rally beforehand allowed people to communicate opinions about the war and gauge crowd sentiment (it is unlikely that the barricade would have occurred after a football game).

3. The barricade was put up in a central location, in the middle of the crowd, and this was crucial.

4. The three students, by dragging the fencing across the street, proved their credibility and started the barricade much more effectively than if they had simply made a verbal suggestion. By doing so, they altered the costs and benefits for everyone else (the risk of being an "instigator" had already been taken).

5. Also important was the clear "symbolic content" of the barricade, because of the past history of protest on Sheridan Road, the obvious analogy with Nixon's blockade of Haiphong harbor.

October 13 Smith

How does a movement start?

At the beginning, the main issue is not "mass mobilization" yet but

1. How core individuals, groups, "vanguard" gets involved

2. How the ideas get generated

Things to think about:

1. Very often (not always) movements are generated out of a handful of friendships (Jim Corbett, Nelson, Jim Dudley)

2. The "background" of organizations, "ideologies" and "values", and also the "macro" political situation are there but do not by themselves explain mobilization

3. Often people make a decision to participate out of a "moral choice". But what forces a person to make a decision? Often a quite practical "immediate" issue (should our church serve as a refuge or not? if we leave, are we leaving these Nicaraguans to their death?)
Sometimes a movement doesn't even see its aims as political at the start.

4. In all three cases raised, close personal connections were crucial (Witness for Peace folks visiting people in Nicaragua, being forgiven for the actions of the US government). People are transformed out of new social connections. Building a movement is a lot about building new kinds of personal relationships.

5. The decisions of social movements interact closely with the actions of their opponents (INS policy, breaking the law is OK since the government is treating you illegally, etc.)

6. Cultures, communities, etc., create a shared set of meanings which can be a resource for mobilization ("Quakers will know what I mean", ancient history of "sanctuary" in churches)

7. New ideas (Jeff Boyer's vigil in the war zone) involve individual creativity but also come out of a social context

8. Rituals (religious, etc.) often have an important role (Witness for Peace's 3 hour prayer vigil with Nicaraguans)

9. There is nothing "automatic" about the start of these movement organizations; chance events matter (picking up a hitchhiker, meeting people in the Nicaraguan village)

10. Role of existing organizations (mainly religious in this case) are not just "ideological" (for example based on Christian principles). Existing organizations and relationships provide the social network (who you call for advice, help, etc.) which provide the basis for the movement.

October 16 Luker

Luker looks at the very beginning of the anti-abortion movement.

Early involvement, organization (the "professionals") happened through existing social relationships.

Later participants (the "housewives") were more likely to be self-recruits.

Moral beliefs do not automatically "turn into" political action.

Early on, people didn't even think of abortion as a political issue.

Early anti-abortion activists were "caught unaware": they thought everyone else thought the same way they did. They did not anticipate that the abortion rights movement would get very far.

Most early anti-abortion activists (1967-1973) were not members of the "general public" but were exposed to the liberalization of abortion laws through their work (doctors, social workers, counselors). Abortion was still not a "politicized" issue for most people. In this period the movement grew slowly.

Roe v. Wade in 1973 came to most anti-abortion folks as a complete surprise. The new recruits were the "housewives": no professional connection with abortion, not likely to have known anyone who had an abortion (even though in California in 1971, one in three pregnancies ended in abortion), not previously politically active or in community groups.

Why did Roe v. Wade change things for this "mass" of people? Abortion laws had already been liberalized for several years (in California). Before, abortion was thought of mainly as a medical matter; Roe v. Wade explicitly stated that the fetus was not a person. Also, it alerted people to the strength of the abortion rights movement.

What made people active in the anti-abortion movement was not just their beliefs about abortion, or liberalized regulations on abortion, but their realization (via Roe v. Wade) that not everyone else shared the same beliefs.

The "housewives" who came in after 1973 came in not because of professional exposure but often through a direct personal experience with pregnancy, parenthood, etc. 70% were "self-recruits"; 20% were recruited through friendships and other existing social ties, 10% were recruited by being exposed to a formal presentation of arguments.

October 18 Kaplan

Many similarities with Jane and early anti-abortion protesters:

People were not aware about the numbers of people who had abortions unless they were involved in some professional/personal way.

Abortion was widely thought of as a medical and not a political issue.

People's move into activism had a lot to do with an intense personal experience. Again, what a personal experience means is not obvious or automatic.

For the women in Jane, personal experiences had to do with frustration with lack of control; for anti-abortion activists, personal experiences had to do with thinking about the fetus as having a life.

Like in the Central American activist case, their action was often driven more by immediate practical concerns than a long-term political agenda.

In the Jane case, the reason they had to mobilize more people (ten cases per week) were straightforwardly "economic" and "practical," not "ideological".

Like in the Central America case, personal networks and friendships were crucial in early mobilization.

Members of Jane shared some beliefs, but each had different motivations and attitudes about what they were doing.

October 20 McAdam

McAdam distinguishes between "high cost/high risk" and "low cost/low risk" activism and argues that explanations for participation for high cost and low cost activism are different.

He suggests a "cyclical model" by which a person first gets involved in low cost activism, meets more and more people, gets used to the idea, starts to build their own identity of being an activist, etc., and gets involved with progressively higher cost activism.

McAdam has 1068 applications of people who wanted to be a part of Freedom Summer. 55 were rejected; of the rest, 720 participated and 239 withdrew.

What is unusual about this data set is that it includes people who withdrew (quite difficult to get) and also the data is on people's attitudes before participation, not afterward.

What makes a person withdraw or participate?

1. Withdrawers and participators have similar kinds of motivations, judged from their applications (although participators tended to have longer answers on average (twice as long)). So motivations cannot explain the difference.

2. Participators tend to have more institutional affiliations (2.4 on average) than withdrawers (1.9 on average). Participators tend to be more likely to belong to explicitly political groups (civil rights groups, etc.) than withdrawers (student club, academic club, etc.).

3. Applicants were asked to name people they wanted to keep informed of their activities. McAdam understands these as social linkages. Participators are more likely to be linked to other participators; withdrawers are more likely to be linked to other withdrawers. On average, participators listed twice as many volunteers and three times as many activists as withdrawers. People linked to withdrawers were 2.5 times more likely to withdraw than the people linked to participants. "Strong ties" (people directly listed) as opposed to "weak ties" (friend of a friend) were especially important.

4. Participators are more likely to have already been involved in civil rights activity.

5. Withdrawers are more likely to be younger (hence more subject to parental pressure?). Being married and having a full-time job seem to make it more likely that you will participate.

October 23 Zhao

Not just organizations, motivations, social networks, "group solidarity", etc. are important for a movement's success: "ecology" is also important.

Here "ecology" is meant to mean the physical placement of buildings, streets, traffic patterns, etc.

How exactly does ecology work in the Beijing Student Movement? (Zhao looks specifically at April 27 march to Tiananmen Square.)

Communication (examples):

Intercom system in dorms

You only have to put signs up in one place to organize a demonstration (the "Triangle" at Beijing U)

You can grow the size of your march by walking around all the dorms first

People talking to their roommates late at night in dorm rooms

People bicycling from one marching group to another, informing each group about the others

People can see each other do things (Berk example, "joining the fun")

Social pressure (examples):

Putting up signs belittling people who play mah-jongg while others are hunger striking

Attacking nonparticipants in your dorm

Interuniversity competition: Beijing U. students started hunger strike because they were afraid of losing leadership position to Fuda U., which had first demonstrated on streets.

Group solidarity:

You feel solidarity with people in the same dorm, major, etc.

Interesting comparisons:

Graduate students didn't participate as much as undergrads

Students who came from Beijing didn't participate as much as students from other cities

If a university had two campuses, one in the Haidan district and one outside, participation was much higher in the Haidan district campus.

In Mao's era, campus ecology facilitated control over students, not mobilization of students.

October 25 Chwe

Communication is crucial for getting people to participate social movements.

What exactly is communicated?

If participating is a coordination problem (I'm going to join only if enough others join), then it's not enough for each person to simply get a message. Each person must know that everyone else has gotten the message, etc.: "common knowledge."

The "injection" model of communication (the sender injects the message into the receiver) is not adequate.

Examples:

Social authority is a coordination problem. Hence building or shoring up authority requires common knowledge, which is formed through media events, rallies, etc.

Buying certain kinds of goods (computers, beer, etc.) is a coordination problem. Hence computer and beer advertisers pay extra per person to advertise on the most popular shows. Advertisers of other goods (batteries, toothpaste) do not.

Why do inward-facing circles give people a sense of togetherness? Perhaps because they generate common knowledge (each person can see that everyone else is paying attention).



Kiva, Chaco Canyon, New Mexico

Why are "central spaces" (Zhao's "triangle" on campus, our Bruin Walk, etc.) helpful for movements? Not just because everyone goes by them; also because everyone knows that everyone walks by them.

How do communications technologies affect social movements? Technologies which generate common knowledge (television, listservs, etc.) would be especially important as compared with technologies which do not (telephone, email, IM, etc.)

October 27 Walgrave and Manssens

What is the influence of mass media?

Usually, media is seen as secondary to organization, social networks (for example Beijing student movement, US out of Central America movements, Jane collective)

Walgrave and Manssens' example of the White March is unusual in that the media took the primary role of both "consensus building" and direct mobilization (publishing maps how to get to the demonstration, where to park, etc.)

How did the media make this happen?

"Framing" the issue in terms of government corruption, gap between politicians and society, etc.

Creating common knowledge among citizens (people were told that many were going to come to the march, that the march was historic, etc.)

Giving explicit mobilizing instructions (maps, train ticket info)

What conditions made this possible?

Media take an active role only when there is clear and manifest disagreement between people and elites

It was a highly emotional and symbolic issue that created an atmosphere of consensus, emotion, and togetherness: clear good vs. evil story

It was a "nonpartisan" issue with no organization behind it; media presented themselves as nonpartisan watchdogs

Story was relatively simple

Controversy was politically impartial

The media environment was commercial and depoliticized (Belgian newspapers used to be closely linked to political parties, but were no longer)

These were "disturbed times": a general scandal atmosphere, moral panic

Population had relatively strong confidence in the media

Weaknesses of paper

French media not considered (40% of population)

Little to no data on participants themselves (how exactly did people understand media reports, etc.)?

What were the media motivations? (TV vs. newspapers)

October 30 Eliasoph

Why are most people not politically involved?

The common explanation is ignorance and laziness. It is often argued that if people were simply to become aware of a given issue and how it affects them personally, then they will become politically active.

Eliasoph argues against this. People are politically uninvolved because they actively work to exclude certain issues from discussion. People construct and maintain a "culture of political avoidance."

Eliasoph interviews and hangs out with various groups: members of a volunteer anti-drug group, (the "volunteers") an anti-nuclear group, (the "activists"), and a country and western dance club (the "cynics")

Among the volunteers, they were often very aware of how environmental and nuclear issues affected them directly, but they spent a lot of time and effort in explaining how these issues were not "close to home".

They often explained their actions in terms of "feeling good" about participating and their own "self-interest."

It was important to them that their actions demonstrated to them and others the importance of volunteering and social-mindedness.

When more political issues came up, they were not ignorant and had strong opinions, but were embarrassed to talk about them in public settings. They preferred to talk about them privately.

Volunteers would be more likely to participate in something if they could understand it as "nonpolitical".

Activists on the other hand were more likely to participate in something once they saw it as political (such as the anti-drug effort).

Even activists were initially reluctant to be explicitly political in public settings.

Activists would claim that they were not effective, and began to value political talk in and of itself.

Cynics made jokes out of everything, and were not hopeful, but perhaps their talk created to them the possibility that at least some people were not fooled.

Communication is not always helpful for social movements. Whether people value talking, and how they talk in different contexts, is also important.

November 1 McAdam

The dynamics of the US civil rights movement is best understood in terms of tactical interaction: tactical innovation by the protestors, and tactical adaptation by authorities.

The civil rights movement had five waves of tactical innovation:

- Bus boycott: Baton Rouge (1953), Montgomery (1955)
- Sit-in: Oklahoma City (1958), Greensboro, NC (1960)
- Freedom ride: May 1961 (previously attempted in 1947)
- Community-wide campaign: Albany, GA (1961), Birmingham (1963)
- Urban riots: Watts (1965)

A tactic was not always successful at first, but once protest leaders figured out how to make it effective, it was widely imitated.

Authorities often did not know how to react at the beginning and often responded with violence and over-reaction which resulted in the protest's success.

The protests worked largely because they created a "crisis situation" for authorities.

As authorities learned how to adapt to each protest technique, and as each protest wave had fewer opportunities (often because of its own success), activity dropped off until another tactic was tried.

Each tactic had advantages and disadvantages.

The bus boycott was effective in urban areas where bus lines were dependent on African-Am passengers, but was costly for participants. This tactic had limited application outside urban areas.

The sit-ins were relatively easy to do (lots of disruption caused by a handful of people) and imposed most costs on the store owners, and could be done in small towns. Authorities adapted, however; by engaging in negotiations and "defusing" the crisis situation.

The freedom rides were dangerous but forced federal intervention by forcing southern states to defy recent Supreme Court rulings. After the displays of shocking violence, state authorities responded by calmly arresting people.

The community-wide protests worked best in cities with notoriously racist police chiefs---it didn't work well in Albany, GA but worked in Birmingham and Selma. The federal government was forced into intervening and passing the Civil Rights Act of 1964. City officials learned how to react calmly (Baltimore, etc.) and the tactic was defused.

November 3 Chwe

This paper presents a model in which each person has a threshold and each person is in a social network.

Given thresholds and the network, the model predicts who will revolt.

Note: here a person wants to revolt if the total number of people revolting is at least her threshold. A person with threshold 2 needs just one partner.

Each person knows only her own threshold and the thresholds of her neighbors in the network.

A central issue here is not just what one knows about others' thresholds, but what one knows about the knowledge of others.

For example, even if you know that a neighbor has a low threshold, you cannot count on her revolting if you don't know what her neighbors are like (the square vs. kite example).

Three main results:

1. The participation of a low-threshold person is much more dependent on her network position than the participation of a high-threshold person.

For example, if you have threshold 3, whether you happen to have two other low-threshold friends makes a big difference. If you have threshold 100, then you only revolt when everyone revolts.

2. When thresholds are high, "weak" links are better.
When thresholds are low, "strong" links are better.

A "weak" link is a link which scatters widely and spans wide "social distance." An acquaintance of an acquaintance tends not to be an acquaintance.

A "strong" link is a link which is very "local" and involuted, like a close friendship. A close friend of a close friend tends to be a close friend.

A city might have many weak links, while a neighborhood might have many strong links.

"Strong" vs. "weak" here is not about the quality of the relationship, but the pattern of links in the overall network.

When thresholds are high, everyone wants to participate only if the "mass" participates, and the "fast" communication of weak links is better.

When thresholds are low, only "local" mobilization is required, and the common knowledge aspect of strong links (I know that you know that...) is better.

3. Revolt depends in a fragile way on people with low thresholds, especially if communication is very non-reciprocal (information flowing from people with low thresholds to people with high thresholds).

If reciprocal communication is allowed ("I'll go if you go") then revolt is much less fragile.

November 6 Lohmann

Lohmann looks at demonstrations in Leipzig, East Germany in 1989-1991. She identifies five "cycles" of demonstrations, the first of which was largely responsible for the fall of the East German regime.

The protests occurred on Mondays at 6pm, after "peace prayers" at Nikolai Church. The tradition of small protests (as few as 10-20 people) at that location at that time had existed for years.

First cycle: started small, quickly "snowballed" after Oct 9 protest when it became clear that the regime was not going to violently suppress them. The regime quickly made reforms in response (on Nov 9, Berlin wall fell).

Second cycle: division between people who wanted reformed socialism and those who wanted immediate unification with West Germany.

Third cycle: protest of too speedy unification, lack of access to Stasi files

Fourth cycle: protest of Gulf War

Fifth cycle: protest of economic collapse in East Germany

Later demonstrations were staged for the benefit of tourists, etc.

What are the dynamics of large "spontaneous" protests?

How exactly does the presence of initial protestors affect mass mobilization?

Threshold model (Chwe, etc.): low threshold people affect "moderates" with slightly higher thresholds, causing a snowball

Lohmann: early actors through their actions reveal information, either about the depth and breadth of popular opposition, or about the objective political situation (whether repression will take place)

Before the October 1989 Leipzig protests, people did not know how many other people hated the regime (no opposition parties, no free press, etc.)

More specifically, in the first cycle of Leipzig protests, the Oct 9, 1989 protest revealed that the regime would not resort to the "Chinese solution."

This first wave brought down the GDR, the Berlin wall fell down, etc. People involved more or less represented the population at large.

Later waves were more "organized" and unrepresentative (population was more "conservative", favored the Christian Democratic Party, favored immediate unification with West Germany; organizers did not favor unification, favored reformed socialism).

No support for threshold model (because later waves did not "snowball").

No support for importance of organizations (because first, most successful wave was completely unorganized, while later waves were more organized).

Lohmann says it's all about the information that the early protests revealed (and the later ones didn't).

Of course the "macro" political environment was also important: Gorbachev's reforms made people think that it was less likely that the Soviet Union would back up the East German regime like they had done before in 1953, 1961.

November 8 Morris

Black southern sit-in movements were consciously planned and would not have been possible without extensive organizational support from preexisting institutions and movement centers (i.e. local churches).

A movement center is a place where various organizations can hold meetings, train volunteers, raise funds, motivate large numbers of people (church congregations, etc.).

Even though the sit-in participants were students, they were organized not by campuses but by organizations centered around churches, and involved the participation of large numbers of community members (to raise funds for legal defense, do bookkeeping, etc.)

The image of the sit-ins as being "spontaneous" is not supported by the evidence.

For example, in Durham, NC in 1958, activists targeted businesses (5 and 10 cent stores) which were more dependent on black trade.

The Greensboro, NC sit in on February 1, 1960 is well known because after it happened, there were sit-ins all over the South (69 sit-ins in two months). From the outside, it looked like a "fever" or "contagion". The large amount of training and organization, which took years to set up, was essential but outside observers didn't see it.

The role of churches and clergyman organizations (SCLC) was to provide meeting spaces, finances, mass communication, etc. It seems like the help was more organizational than "ideological" (i.e. Christian church doctrine wasn't so important in legitimizing direct action).

Organizations can have an "indirect" role: for example, the NAACP did not directly support the students but many of the networks and relationships came out of NAACP involvement.

Sit ins were more closely "clustered" when there was a broader network of support, which was more typical of "border states" than the deep South. The sit ins in the deep South occurred only in urban areas where there was a lot of church and community support (Birmingham, Memphis, Atlanta, etc.).

November 13 Robnett

What is leadership about?

Typically most attention is paid to leaders who have titles, are formally responsible for decisions of an organization, etc.

Robnett argues for the importance of "bridge leaders", people who work more at the grassroots level, "bridging potential constituents and adherents as well as potential former leaders."

In the civil rights movement, women were largely excluded from formal leadership positions. Women who did have titles had positions which were typically subservient to men (clerical positions, assistants). Hence women with a strong interest in organizing preferred to not have a title and operate "autonomously."

Charles Payne (1990): "Men led, but women organized."

Robnett: "It was not the case that the potential former leaders of the movement mobilized the masses. Rather bridge leaders acted to mobilize the potential former leaders."

Examples:

Annie Devine was "like a go-between with black male leaders [notably preachers] and young folks [who resisted their authority]... Mrs. Devine was a country diplomat."

Jo Ann Robinson and members of the Womens' Political Council in Montgomery had first organized a bus boycott, and when the time was right (Rosa Parks) tried to get the ministers on board.

Septima Clark organized Highlander Folk School in Tennessee (where a lot of young organizers got to know each other) and Citizenship Education Program (which was successful in reaching the "masses" with voter registration drives). Clark had the ability to "connect the politics of the movement with the needs of the people."

Diane Nash: After the first freedom riders were almost beaten to death in Alabama, SCLC leaders wanted to stop. Nash voiced the feelings of the participants that they must go on. Nash was also responsible for the strategy of not posting bond and staying in jail.

The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) was organized to truly represent Mississippi at the 1964 Democratic Convention. Fannie Lou Hamer, the vice president, insisted on all the seats or half the seats. Other civil rights leaders (Bayard Rustin, Roy Wilkins, etc.) compromised on behalf of the women, urging them to accept the compromise of only two seats, and telling them that they did not understand the political process.

November 15 Smith

A "frame" is an "intepretive formula that assigns meanings to events and issues by selecting out and organizing certain elements into packaged story lines."

"Frames employ clusters of assertions, metaphors, anecdotes, catchphrases, exemplars, and visual images to highlight certian aspects of an event of an issue or event that fit and promote and internally coherent interpretation, and disregard others that do not."

A frame places boundaries and structures on attention and the resulting pattern of discourse.

A good frame "deeply engages emotions", "is not blatantly contradicted by evidence", and "strongly resonates with themes deeply embedded in the dominant cultural tradition."

Examples of Reagan administration frames:

Soviet agression, fragile democracy

Activist frames:

Another Vietnam, botching-diplomacy, wayward America, imperial America

Debates were not just factual or argumentative, but were against the opponent's frames.

Example: US fighter planes shooting down 2 Libyan jets and Reagan being flown there after the fact for a photo op

Both sides had very similar techniques for working the press:

Repetition, mantras ("It's illegal, immoral, and it won't work"), "message of the day"

Strong, blunt image ("human shield", "Freedom Fighters")

Visuals, drama, personal hooks (would you trust your local minister or Eliot Abrams?)

Developing personal contacts with reporters, "getting on the Rolodex"

Developing credibility and having factual information for reporters

Working local press together with national press

Consciously changing the story line so as to keep it interesting, developing "new angles" for saying the same thing

Being available for press calls 24 hours a day, dropping everything to talk with them

November 17 Nepstad

Narratives are like frames in that they are a way to "structure" thought and communication.

Nepstad argues that the participation of US residents in the Central America peace movement (as compared to for example movements in Peru, Columbia, etc.) is partly explained by the resonance of the narrative of Archbishop Romero with US Christians.

Narratives are slightly different than "frames"; they are less "manipulable" and "dialogical" and more "unidirectional". You can't challenge the plot of a narrative. Like frames, they carry advantages and pitfalls.

A life story can make abstract issues compelling (Anne Frank, Rigoberta Menchu, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, etc.). A "melodrama" (a story about clear good and evil) is particularly powerful.

A narrative is effective if it provides (1) a personalized account, (2) moral clarity and a sympathetic hero, (3) ontological resonance, (4) a model for action.

Romero's life had many similarities to Jesus Christ's: born into a humble family, a conversion experience, siding with the poor and powerless, standing up to existing religious authorities, calling for radical social transformation, outspokenness in response to death threats, and killed for political reasons.

Also, the setting in which the stories were told (in churches) and the narrators (missionaries who had lived in Central America) gave the story greater credibility.

Religions and other world views can be "resources for action" independently of their ideological content.

November 28 Polletta

In the student sit-in movement which started in 1960 in Greensboro (as described in Morris's article), students described themselves as acting "spontaneously," even when in fact there was a lot of organizing and planning behind their action (as Morris describes, there was training of activists, meetings in churches, fund-raising and other connections between students and churches, etc.)

Why did the students describe themselves as acting "spontaneously"?

Instrumental reasons: to avoid charges that the movement was due to "outside agitators" (for example the Communist party) and to emphasize their independence from established "adult" civil rights organizations

But students described the movement as "spontaneous" even to themselves. Why would they emphasize to themselves the absence of planning?

Polletta argues that "spontaneity" was an important part of a common narrative which students used to think about and talk to each other about their movement. This narrative "constituted the identity" of the movement (i.e. if someone asks you what the movement was about, you would answer in a narrative, a story).

The narrative was like this: Previously we were quiet, but we were suffering from centuries of accumulated anger. We were weary and impatient. Then BOOM, "out of nowhere", the sit-ins occurred.

Why did they use this narrative? Did they self-consciously "fool themselves"?