

CHAPTER 14

Social Movements

Elizabeth D. Hutchison

Chapter Outline

Opening Questions

Key Ideas

Case Study: Fighting for a Living Wage

A Definition of Social Movements

Social Movements and the History of Social Work

Perspectives on Social Movements

Political Opportunities Perspective

Openness of the Political System

Stability of Political Alignments

Availability of Elite Allies

International Relations

Mobilizing Structures Perspective

Informal and Formal Structures

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The Life Course of Social Movements

Cultural Framing Perspective

Frames for Understanding That a Problem Exists

Frames for Recognizing a Window of Opportunity

Frames for Establishing Goals

Frames for Identifying Pathways for Action

Emerging Perspectives

Social Movement Outcomes

Social Movement Trends

Social Movements and Contemporary Social Work

Implications for Social Work Practice

Key Terms

Active Learning

Web Resources

Opening Questions

- How might the literature on social movements help social work with its social reform mission?
- What are the major theoretical perspectives on social movements?

Key Ideas

As you read this chapter, take note of these central ideas:

1. Social movements are formed when people feel that one or more social institutions are unjust and need to be changed.
2. The profession of social work has its origins in the confluence of two social movements: the charity organization society movement and the settlement house movement.
3. Three theoretical perspectives on social movements have emerged in the past 2 decades: the political opportunities perspective, the mobilizing structures perspective, and the cultural framing perspective. None of these perspectives taken individually is sufficient for understanding social movements,

but taken together, they provide a multidimensional understanding. Dissatisfaction with these three perspectives is leading to emerging theories of social movements.

4. Social movements are neither completely successful nor completely unsuccessful.
5. Recently, there has been a rise in transnational social movement organizations (TSMOs).
6. Contemporary social work, like historical social work, must manage a tension between professional services and social reform.

CASE STUDY

Fighting for a Living Wage

Greg Halpern was in his senior year at Harvard University in 1998 when Aaron Bartley, his labor activist roommate and childhood friend, “dragged” him to a meeting of the Harvard Living Wage Campaign (Terkel, 2003). Greg remembers that he was in the lunch line a few days later when a friend made a joke about how bad the food was. Greg laughed, and then he looked up and exchanged glances with one of the young women working behind the lunch counter. He saw her anger and hurt. He was deeply embarrassed and realized that most Harvard students had never been taught about the people who clean the bathrooms, serve the food, or clean the classrooms. Greg became active in the living wage campaign at Harvard, attending weekly rallies and sending letters to the university president, calling for the custodians, security guards, and food service workers at Harvard to be paid a living wage. In March 1999, the campaign presented the university president with the “Worst Employer in Boston” award while he was addressing a group of high school students. At graduation, some students chartered an airplane to pull a sign behind it that read, “Harvard needs a living wage” (Tanner, 2002).

That same spring, in his final year at Harvard, Greg Halpern did an independent study in which he interviewed and photographed university workers. He decided to blow the interviews up on 10-foot

pages and stick them up in the public space provided for students, so that other students could know the stories of the low-wage workers. Greg had never been an activist, but he was dismayed at what he was hearing from workers, and he remained active in the Harvard Living Wage Campaign after he graduated. The campaign had been holding rallies at Harvard for 3 years, but nothing was happening. During the spring of 2001, 2 years after Greg graduated from Harvard, there was growing interest among the members of the Harvard Living Wage Campaign to engage in a sit-in. As they discussed this option, Greg remembered the custodian he had interviewed 2 years earlier. Bill Brook, who cleaned the room in which they were meeting, was 65 years old, worked two full-time jobs, and slept 4 hours per night (Terkel, 2003).

Greg became one of the leaders of the Harvard Living Wage Campaign sit-in strike that occupied Massachusetts Hall, the president's building, for 21 days, demanding that the university raise the wages for 1,400 employees who were making less than a living wage. Throughout the strike, the students, who had never participated in such an event before, kept in touch with the media by cell phones and e-mail (sent and received on their laptops).

There were 50 students inside Massachusetts Hall and a growing group of students on the outside. Three hundred professors or more took out a full-page ad in the *Boston Globe* in support of the students. The dining hall workers and food workers began to deliver pizzas to the students on the inside, and many workers took the risk to wear buttons on the job that said "We Support the Living Wage Campaign." Every local labor union in Cambridge, Massachusetts endorsed the students, and national labor leaders came to speak. The AFL-CIO union sent one of its top lawyers to negotiate with the university administration. Several high-profile religious leaders made appearances to support the students. On the 15th day of the sit-in, the Cambridge mayor and city council, along with other sympathizers, marched from City Hall to Harvard Yard in support of the students. During the second week of the sit-in, 30 to 40 Harvard Divinity School students held a vigil, chanting, "Where's your horror? Where's your rage? Div School wants a living wage." On the last night of the sit-in, there was a rally of about 3,000 people outside Massachusetts Hall (Tanner, 2002; Terkel, 2003).

In the end, the Harvard administration agreed to negotiate higher wages with the unions. Higher wages were paid, but the students were not fully satisfied with the results of their campaign. Two of the student activists later coproduced an advocacy film based on the sit-in, *Occupation: The Harvard University Living Wage Sit-in*, narrated by Ben Affleck (Raza & Velez, 2002). The sit-in at Harvard was neither the beginning nor the end of the gathering living wage movement in the United States. The sit-in built on the momentum that had started in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1994, and it fueled new actions on other university campuses. It was one piece of a story of a rapidly growing social movement.

In 1993, religious groups in Baltimore were seeing an increase in use of soup kitchens and food pantries by the working poor (Quigley, 2001; Tanner, 2002). They were angry that private companies involved in the city's urban renewal projects were paying low wages in order to bid low to win contracts with the city. They took their concerns to Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD), a coalition of 50 Baltimore churches that had been advocating for services and subsidies for Baltimore's poor residents since the 1980s (Snarr, 2007). BUILD decided to join forces with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and low-wage service workers to create a local campaign to develop a law that would require businesses that had contracts with the city to pay their workers a "living wage," a pay rate that would lift a family of four over the federal poverty level. At the time, the federal minimum wage was \$4.25 an hour, a wage that could not lift a family out of poverty. The living wage law was enacted in July 1996, requiring city contractors with municipal contracts over \$5,000 to pay a minimum wage of \$6.16 an hour in 1996, with increments to reach \$7.70 an hour in 1999. The law is estimated to have affected 1,500 to 2,000 workers (Quigley, 2001; Tanner, 2002).

The BUILD coalition had no intention of sparking a national social movement, but their success helped to trigger a nationwide alliance of religious and labor groups that has come to be known as the living wage movement. Local grassroots coalitions of activists have used a variety of tactics, including lobbying, postcard campaigns, rallies, door knocking, leafleting, workshops, and sit-ins to achieve their goals in more than 120 localities. The policy solutions have varied from locality to locality, with some bolder than others, but all have

established a wage above the federal minimum wage for some group of workers. Some of the local living wage ordinances, like the one in Baltimore, cover only municipal workers. Others have been more expansive in their approach, like the ones in San Francisco and San Jose that cover all workers, public and private (Roosevelt, 2013). The living wage movement has also helped to enact legislation at the state rather than local level. As of February 2014, a total of 23 states plus the District of Columbia have enacted minimum wage laws that set the minimum wage higher than the federal requirement (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2014b).

Each local coalition is different. In Alexandria, Virginia, the living wage campaign started with the Tenants' and Workers' Support Committee, which had formed in 1986 to fight evictions of residents in low-rent housing. They were eventually joined by seven religious congregations and 17 unions. In Los Angeles, the living wage campaign was orchestrated by the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE), which was created by a coalition of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union, Hispanic neighborhood groups, a tenant group, Communities for a Better Environment, and religious organizations (Bernstein, 2002). These campaigns benefited from much assistance from the Living Wage Resource Center established by the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN). ACORN developed a 225-page guide to assist local activists in organizing a successful living wage campaign, written by labor economist David Reynolds. ACORN, an organization that once had neighborhood chapters in more than 90 cities, organized national training conferences and also regularly dispatched staff to consult with local coalitions.

The living wage movement has drawn on stories of the impact of living wage ordinances on the lives of low-wage workers to ignite public support for new campaigns. Here are some of the stories told:

- A retail worker at the Los Angeles airport was able to drop one of her part-time jobs to enroll in a class to build career skills.
- A parking lot attendant in Alexandria, Virginia, was able to quit one of his three jobs to spend more time with his family.
- A security guard in Tucson, Arizona, could finally take care of some small car repairs and start a savings account.

In 2006, a documentary called *Waging a Living* (Weisberg, 2006), which chronicles the daily struggles of four low-wage workers, premiered on public television and became available for sale and rental.

Along the way, the living wage movement has benefited from the support of a number of organizations. The Economic Policy Institute developed a guide to living wage initiatives and their economic impacts on its website. The National Low Income Housing Coalition compiled a report that calculated the amount of money a household needs to afford a rental unit in specific localities. The Brennan Center for Justice, located at the New York University School of Law, provided assistance to design and implement living wage campaigns, including economic impact analysis, legislative drafting, and legal analysis and defense. Responsible Wealth, a national network of businesspeople, investors, and affluent citizens, developed a living wage covenant for businesses interested in economic fairness. The Political Economy Research Institute (PERI), at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, collected a number of research reports on the effects of living wage laws.

One of the more promising developments in the living wage social movement was the entry of university and high school students into the movement. The Living Wage Action Coalition (LWAC), made up of university students and recent graduates who had participated in living wage campaigns around the country, was created in the summer of 2005. LWAC toured around colleges and universities in the United States, running workshops about strategies for successful living wage campaigns for low-wage workers on campus (Living Wage Action Coalition, n.d.).

The living wage movement started in the United States, but by 2001, it had crossed national lines to London, England, where it has spread to hospitals, finance companies, universities, art galleries, and hotels (Living Wage Foundation, 2014). In October 2009, Asia Floor Wage, a loose coalition of labor and other groups, was formed to propose a floor wage for garment workers in Asia. Activists in 11 European countries participated in events to demand that retailers pay a living wage to all garment workers in their supply chains; the events included leafleting, public debates, visiting corporate headquarters, and hosting film screenings. These events were organized by a

coalition of activists involved in a “clean clothes campaign” (fighting for the rights of workers in the global garment industry) (Clean Clothes Campaign, 2009). In 2013, a coalition of community activists, faith-based organizations, and unions concerned about the growing gap between the rich and the poor in New Zealand began a campaign called Living Wage Aotearoa New Zealand (2014).

Back in the United States, 2014 has been marked by an energetic debate about growing income inequality and the plight of low-wage workers. Fast-food workers around the country demanded wages of \$15 an hour. One small town in Washington state voted to set the wage floor at \$15 an hour, instead of the \$9 state minimum wage. President Obama recommended that the federal minimum wage be raised from \$7.25 to \$10.10 (Kelly, 2014). Minimum wage laws apply to all employers whereas living wage laws have typically applied only to employers in government-subsidized jobs. In December 2013, Liz Halloran, reporter for National Public Radio, noted that in the midst of rising agitation for increasing the minimum wage, the living wage movement hadn’t been getting much attention lately. Paul Sonn of the National Employment Law Project (NELP) responded that living wage and minimum wage are part of the same policy movement to promote wage fairness (Halloran, 2013).

A DEFINITION OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

What happens when a group of people, like the many people involved in living wage campaigns, think that certain arrangements are unjust and need to be changed? Sometimes they work together to try to bring about the desired changes—not just for themselves but for a large group of people. These joint efforts are **social movements**—ongoing, large-scale, collective efforts to bring about (or resist) social change.

We can think of social movements as either proactive or reactive (Ballantine & Roberts, 2014). **Proactive social movements** seek to reform existing social arrangements and try out new ways of living together. The living wage, Occupy Wall Street, and marriage equality movements are examples of proactive social movements. **Reactive social movements**, on the other hand, seek to defend traditional values and social arrangements. Christian and Islamic fundamentalist and property rights movements are

examples of reactive social movements. Both types of social movements are common today in the United States and across the world.



Photo 14.1 Social movements can be categorized as proactive (trying out new ways of living and cooperating) or reactive (defending traditional values). The U.S. civil rights movement was an example of a proactive social movement.

© Bettmann/CORBIS

Mario Diani (della Porta & Diani, 2006) identifies the following properties that distinguish social movements from other social collectivities. They

- Are involved in conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents.
- Are linked by dense informal networks.
- Share a distinct collective identity. (p. 20)

It is protest that distinguishes social movements from other types of

social networks, but a single episode of protest is not a social movement unless it is connected to a longer-lasting network of public action (Tilly & Wood, 2013).

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND THE HISTORY OF SOCIAL WORK

Like many of the world's religions, some nation-states, labor unions, the YMCA/YWCA, and the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, the profession of social work is generally considered to have its origin in social movements. More specifically, the social work profession developed out of the confluence of two social movements: the charity organization society movement and the settlement house movement. You have probably studied these social movements in some of your other courses, so they are not discussed in great detail here. But as social workers, we should recognize how intertwined the history of social work is with social movements.

Both the charity organization society movement and the settlement house movement emerged out of concern during the late 1800s about the ill effects of industrialization, including urban overcrowding and economic instability among low-paid workers. Both social movements developed in England and spread to the United States. But from the beginning, their orientations were very different.

The **charity organization society (COS) movement** developed because private charity organizations became overtaxed by the needs of poor people. Middle- and upper-class individuals were fearful that a coalition of unemployed people and low-paid workers would revolt and threaten the stability of established political and economic institutions. Leaders of the COS movement saw poverty as based in individual pathology and immorality and set the goal of coordinating charity giving to ensure that no duplication occurred. Volunteer “friendly visitors” were assigned to poor families to help them correct character flaws and develop strong moral fiber. Leaders of the COS movement believed in private, rather than public, charity. The provision of efficient and effective service was the primary agenda of the COS.

The **settlement house movement** was stimulated by the same social circumstances but was based on very different values and goals. Whereas COS leaders focused on individual pathology, leaders of the settlement

house movement focused on environmental hazards. They developed settlement houses in urban neighborhoods where “settlers” lived together as “good neighbors” to poor families and were actively involved in research, service, and reform. The settlers supported labor activities, lobbied for safe and sanitary housing, provided space for local political groups, offered day care, and provided a variety of cultural and educational programs. They published the results of their research widely and used it to push for governmental reform. **Social reform**—the creation of more just social institutions—was the primary agenda of the settlement house movement.

Over time, workers from the two social movements began to interact at annual meetings of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections, and social work as an occupation took shape. With efforts to professionalize the occupation of social work and, later, to win acceptance for the public social welfare institution, the social reform agenda of the settlement house movement lost ground. Direct service became the focus—specifically, individual and family casework in health and welfare agencies and social work with groups in the settlement houses and YMCAs/YWCAs. This transition away from reform toward a service model is not an uncommon trajectory of social movements. However, almost a century later, social work continues to experience a tension between service and social reform.

Although social work emerged from social movements, it is now a profession, not a social movement. Some social workers work for social movement organizations, however, and the social work profession struggles with its relationship to a variety of social movements. For example, Chapter 13 discussed the tensions in community social work around issues of social action. With the profession’s emphasis on social justice, we should understand how social movements emerge and become successful. That is why this chapter on social movements is included in this book and why the professional literature is beginning to make use of social movement theory and to call for greater social work involvement with social movements (see, e.g., Dudziak & Profitt, 2012; Reisch, 2008; Thompson, 2002).

Critical Thinking Questions 14.1

Have you participated in any social movement activities? If so, what were your reasons? If not, what have been the reasons? Are there particular historical social movements that you think have had a good

impact on U.S. or global societies? Are there particular historical social movements that you think have had a detrimental impact on U.S. or global societies? Are there recent social movements you would like to know more about? If so, how might you go about learning about them?

PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Early social science literature on social movements was based on a relatively unified perspective, commonly called **strain theory**. According to this theory, social movements develop in response to some form of strain in society, when people's efforts to cope with stress become collective efforts. Different versions of strain theory focus on different types of social strains, such as strain due to rapid social change, social inequality, social isolation and lack of community, or conflicts in cultural beliefs (Buechler, 2011). Discussion in earlier chapters has built a case that each of these types of strain exists in the United States today.

Conflict perspective

Recent social science theory and research have been critical of social strain theory, however. Critics argue that strain is always present to some degree in all societies, but social movements do not always appear in response, and their intensity does not vary systematically with the level of strain (della Porta & Diani, 2006; Tilly & Wood, 2013). These critics suggest that social strain is a necessary but not sufficient condition to predict the development of a social movement. Any social movement theory must start, they insist, with the condition of social strain, but other theories are needed to understand why a particular social movement develops when it does, what form that movement takes, and how successful the movement is in accomplishing its goals. Without the sense of outrage felt by religious leaders in Baltimore in 1994, BUILD would not have joined forces with other groups, and without a sense of outrage in many localities, the living wage movement could not have capitalized on the Baltimore momentum. But the situation of low-wage workers had not changed suddenly, so why did the social reform movement develop when it did?

Instead of focusing on social strains, some social psychologists have looked for psychological factors or attitudes that might explain which individuals are likely to get involved in social movements. A variety of psychological characteristics have been investigated, including authoritarian personality, emotional conflicts with parents, alienation, aggression, and relative deprivation. Empirical investigations have found very little support for a relationship between such psychological characteristics and social movement participation, however. Indeed, research indicates that social movement activists tend to be people who are rich in relational resources and well-integrated into their communities. Research also indicates that a great many people who never join social movements have similar attitudes about movement goals to those of active movement participants (della Porta & Diani, 2006). Recently, however, some social movement scholars have suggested it is time to take another look at what motivates people to participate in social movement activities (Castells, 2012). We examine some of those ideas later, under the discussion of emerging perspectives.

Psychodynamic perspective

Theory and research about social movements have flourished in the past 4-plus decades, and in 2012 Roberta Garner and Mayer Zald suggested that the study of social movements is “hotter” than ever. I would agree that it is hotter than at any period since I started work on the first edition of this book in the mid-1990s. Throughout the 1970s, social movement scholars in the United States and Europe worked independently of each other and developed different theories and different research emphases. In the past 25 years, however, U.S. and European social movement scholars have worked together and engaged in comparative analysis of social movements across place and time (della Porta, Kriesi, & Rucht, 2009). Originally, these collaborative efforts focused only on social movements in the United States and western Europe. After the momentous political events in eastern Europe in the late 1980s, however, eastern European social movements received extensive and intensive investigation. More recently, the protest movements of the Arab Spring of 2011 have captured the attention of social movement scholars.



Photo 14.2 Social work experiences a tension between service (helping those in need) and reform (changing organizational structures and systems). Here, workers fight for a living wage.

© Reuters/Corbis

Three major perspectives on social movements have emerged out of this lively interest. I refer to these as the political opportunities perspective, the mobilizing structures perspective, and the cultural framing perspective. There is growing agreement among social movement scholars that none of these perspectives taken alone provides adequate tools for understanding social movements (Buechler, 2011; Edwards, 2014). Each perspective adds important dimensions to our understanding, however, and taken together they provide a relatively comprehensive theory of social movements. Social movement scholars recommend research that synthesizes concepts across the three perspectives. The recent social movement literature offers one of the best examples of contemporary attempts to integrate and synthesize multiple theoretical perspectives to give a more complete picture of social phenomena.

Political Opportunities Perspective

Many advocates have been concerned about the deteriorating economic situation of low-wage workers in the United States for some time. After Republicans regained control of Congress in 1994, advocates saw little hope for major increases in the federal minimum wage. The federal minimum wage was increased slightly, from \$4.25 an hour to \$5.15 an hour in 1996, with a Democratic president and a Republican Congress. However, under the circumstances, advocates of a living wage decided it was more feasible to engage in campaigns at the local rather than federal level to ensure a living wage for all workers. A shift occurred at the federal level when the Democrats regained control of Congress in November 2006. After being stalled at \$5.15 for 10 years, the minimum wage received a three-step increase from Congress in May 2007, and Republican president George W. Bush signed the new wage bill into law. The law called for an increase of the federal minimum wage to \$5.85 in the summer of 2007, to \$6.55 in the summer of 2008, and to \$7.25 in the summer of 2009 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2014). In early 2014, Democratic president Barack Obama recommended an increase in the federal minimum wage to \$10.10, but this proposal was given little chance in a highly polarized Congress. In the meantime, state and local governments continue to consider the issue of fair wages. These observations are in line with the **political opportunities (PO) perspective**, whose main ideas are summarized in Exhibit 14.1.

Conflict perspective

The PO perspective begins with the assumption that social institutions—particularly political and economic institutions—benefit the more powerful members of society, often called **elites**, and disadvantage many. The elites typically have routine access to institutionalized political channels, whereas disadvantaged groups are denied access. Power disparities make it very difficult for some groups to successfully challenge existing institutions, but the PO perspective suggests that institutions are not consistently invulnerable to challenge by groups with little power. Social movements can at times take advantage of institutional arrangements vulnerable to challenge. The BUILD coalition was convinced that it was morally unjust for workers to receive wages that kept them below the federal poverty line, but they astounded even themselves by setting in motion a process that would spark a national social movement. Theories of social movements

often underestimate the ability of challengers to mount and sustain social movements (Morris, 2004).

Exhibit 14.1 Key Ideas of the Political Opportunities Perspective

- Social movements emerge when political opportunities are open.
- Political systems differ from each other, and change over time, in their openness to social movements.
- A given political system is not equally open or closed to all challengers.
- Success of one social movement can open the political system to challenges from other social movements.
- A given political system's openness to social movements is influenced by international events.
- Opportunities for social movements open at times of instability in political alignments.
- Social movements often rely on elite allies.

The political system itself may influence whether a social movement will emerge at a given time, as well as the form the movement will take. Social movement scholars have identified several influential dimensions of political systems and analyzed the ways in which changes in one or more of these dimensions make the political system either receptive or vulnerable to challenges (della Porta & Diani, 2006; Tarrow, 2006). Here, we examine four of those dimensions: openness of the political system, stability of political alignments, availability of elite allies, and international relations.

Openness of the Political System

It might seem reasonable to think that activists will undertake collective action when political systems are open and avoid such action when political systems are closed. The relationship of system openness or closure to social movement activity is not that simple, however. They have instead a curvilinear relationship: Neither full access nor its total absence encourages the greatest degree of collective action. Some resistance stimulates movement solidarity, but too much resistance makes collective action too costly for social movement participants (Meyer, 2004). The nature of the political structure will also affect the types of social movement activities that emerge in a given society. Researchers have found that France, with its

highly centralized government and hostility to professional social movement organizations, is more prone to strikes, demonstrations, and collective violence than other European countries that are more fragmented and democratic in their governmental structures (Koopmans, 2004).

Systems perspective

More generally, but in a similar vein, democratic states facilitate social movements and authoritarian states repress them (Tilly & Wood, 2013). Indeed, social movements as a form of collective action arose with the development of the modern democratic state (Marks & McAdam, 2009). However, because democratic states invite participation, even criticism, many challenging issues that might spark social movements are “processed” out of existence through electoral processes. It is hard to mount a social movement if it seems that the political system is easily influenced without serious collective action. On the other hand, the repression found in authoritarian states may serve to radicalize social movement leaders, as was evident during the Arab Spring uprisings of 2011 (Castells, 2012). Furthermore, as was evident in eastern Europe in the late 1980s, authoritarian states are not always effective in repressing challenges. The political leadership’s efforts to appease the population by offering small liberties had a snowball effect. Relaxation of social control in a previously repressive political system often has the unintended consequence of fueling the fire of long-held grievances.

Social movement researchers are interested in how police handle protest events. They have identified two contrasting styles of policing: the escalated-force model and the negotiated control model. The *escalated-force model* puts little value on the right to protest, has low tolerance for many forms of protest, favors little communication between the police and demonstrators, and makes use of coercive and even illegal methods to control protests. The *negotiated control model* honors the right to demonstrate peacefully, tolerates even disruptive forms of protest, puts high priority on communication between police and demonstrators, and avoids coercive control as much as possible. Social movement scholars suggest that in Western societies, including the United States, the escalated-force model lost favor and the negotiated control model became prominent after the intense protest wave of the 1960s (della Porta & Diani, 2006). They

also argue, however, that preference for the negotiated control model has proven fragile in the face of the new challenge of transnational protest movements. In the United States, political activists have been spied on and disrupted in the name of the war on terror since September 11, 2001. In February 2003, in the weeks leading up to the beginning of the Iraq War, New York City authorities refused march permits to United for Peace and Justice, a coalition of more than 800 antiwar and social justice groups. Later that same year, the Philadelphia police commissioner classified the Free Trade Area of America (FTAA) as outsiders who were coming to terrorize the city; this was done to allow the city to receive \$8.5 million in war-on-terror money (Bornstein, 2009).

A given political system is not equally open or closed to all challengers at a given time; some social movements are favored over others. Even in a democracy, universal franchise does not mean equal access to the political system; wealth buys access not easily available to poor people's movements (Bornstein, 2009). Indeed, the rapid success and growth of the living wage movement has been a surprise to many who support it ideologically, because it has been hard to sustain poor people's movements in the past.

The success of one social movement can open the political system to challenges by other social movements. For example, successful legislative action by the Black civil rights movement during the 1960s opened the way for other civil rights movements, particularly the women's movement, which benefited from Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which included prohibiting employment discrimination on the basis of sex (McAdam, 1996a). But the successful movement may also open the way for opponent movements, called **countermovements**, as well as for allied movements. The women's movement has been countered by a variety of antifeminist movements, including the antiabortionist movement and a set of interrelated movements that focus on traditional gender roles for family life. Indeed, the living wage movement has engendered opposition coalitions that have launched intensive lobbying campaigns to convince state legislators in several states to bar cities from establishing their own minimum wages (Murray, 2001; Quigley, 2001).

Stability of Political Alignments

PO theorists agree that the routine transfer of political power from one group of incumbents to another, as when a different political party takes control of the U.S. presidency or Congress, opens opportunities for the

development or reactivation of social movements (Tarrow, 2006). At such times, some social movements lose favor and others gain opportunity. In the United States, in both the 1930s and the 1960s, changes in political party strength appear to have been related to increased social movement activity among poor people. Some observers note that social movements on the Left mobilized during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, and social movements on the Right mobilized during the Reagan and George H. W. Bush administrations and again when the Republicans took over Congress in 1994 (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996); social movements on the Right also appear to have gained momentum when George W. Bush became president in 2000. That did not mean, however, that local grassroots movements for a living wage could not be mounted. Edwin Amenta and colleagues (Amenta, Caren, & Stobaugh, 2012) take a slightly different view of the relationship between political regimes and social movement activity. They agree that political regimes on the Left spur the mobilization of Left-oriented social movements and political regimes on the Right spur the mobilization of Right-oriented social movements, but their research also indicates that Left regimes incite Right-oriented social movements and even more so, Right regimes incite Left-oriented social movements.

Disruption of political alliances occurs at times other than political elections, for both partisan and nonpartisan reasons, and such disruptions produce conflicts and divisions among elites. When elites are divided, social movements can sometimes encourage some factions to take a stand for disenfranchised groups and support the goals of the movement. The Harvard Living Wage Campaign garnered the support of the mayor and city council in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Disruptions in political alliances also occur when different branches of the government—such as the executive branch and the legislative branch—are at odds with each other. Such conflict was the case at the federal level in the early days of the living wage campaign but may have had little effect on the campaign because it was being fought at the local level. New coalitions may be formed, and the uncertainty that ensues may encourage groups to make new or renewed attempts to challenge institutional arrangements, hoping to find new elite allies. The new local coalitions formed during the living wage campaigns have often breathed new life into local progressive advocates (Murray, 2001).

The events in eastern Europe in the late 1980s and the Arab Spring of 2011 represent another type of political opportunity—one that has received little attention by social movement scholars—the opportunity that opens

when a political regime loses legitimacy with those it governs. As reported in Chapter 9, many political analysts suggest that the current era is marked by a reduced capacity of nations to govern and increasing cynicism on the part of citizens about the ability of governments to govern. Some social movement scholars suggest that this sort of instability is contributing to the global spread of social movement activity (Castells, 2012).

Availability of Elite Allies

Participants in social movements often lack both power and resources for influencing the political process. But they may be assisted by influential allies who play a variety of supportive roles. These elite allies may provide financial support, or they may provide name and face recognition that attracts media attention to the goals and activities of the movement. Research indicates a strong correlation between the presence of elite allies and social movement success (della Porta & Diani, 2006). The Harvard students, who mostly came from elite families themselves, were able to attract a number of elite allies, including Congressman Edward M. Kennedy, former Labor secretary Robert Reich, chairman of the NAACP Julian Bond, high-profile religious leaders, and actors Ben Affleck and Matt Damon. Michael Moore and Cornel West showed up to address the assembly of Occupy Wall Street in 2011.

Social movement participants often have ambivalent relationships with their elite allies, however. On the one hand, powerful allies provide needed resources; on the other hand, they may limit or distort the goals of the movement (della Porta & Diani, 2006). The early relationship between participants in the disability movement and actor Christopher Reeve is a good example of the tension that can develop between movement participants and their elite allies. When Reeve was paralyzed following an equestrian accident in 1995, the media quickly assigned him the role of star speaker for the disability community. Many in the disability movement were offended. Reeve's personal agenda was to find a cure for spinal cord injuries, but the movement's emphasis was on personal assistance for people with disabilities—on living with disability, not curing it. People in the disability movement were concerned that the emphasis on a cure would undermine their efforts to win public acceptance of their disabilities and to make their environments more accessible.

International Relations

Since the 18th century, social movements have diffused rapidly across national boundaries, and the fate of national social movements has been influenced by international events. In the 19th century, the antislavery movement spread from England to France, the Netherlands, and the Americas (Tarrow, 2006). The mid-20th-century Black civil rights movement in the United States was influenced by international attention to the gap between our national image as champion of human rights and the racial discrimination that permeated our social institutions (McAdam, 1996a). The fight for the right of women to vote was first won in New Zealand in the 1880s; the United States followed almost 40 years later, in 1920. It took some time, but gradually the movement for women's suffrage spread around the world (Sernau, 2014).

The recent revolution in communication technology is quickening the diffusion of collective action, as evidenced by recent democracy and justice movements. Democracy movements surged across the Arab world in 2011 after the successful democracy movements in Tunisia and Egypt. In the midst of the deep financial crisis that began in late 2007, unemployment reached 22% in Spain by 2011. After ignoring the severity of the situation for some time, the Spanish government, under pressure from Germany and the International Monetary Fund, instituted austerity policies that resulted in deep cuts in health, education, and social services. In protest, activists put out the call to occupy Barcelona's Catalunya Square on May 16, 2011, an action so successful it was followed up on in 100 other Spanish cities as well as 800 cities around the world. The Occupy Wall Street action that began in the United States in September 2011 was modeled on this social movement (Castells, 2012).

Tarrow (2006) suggests that the international spread of social movements was aided by two growing trends. First, there was a growing attitude, after the end of the Cold War, that it is acceptable for nations to interfere with the affairs of other nations. Second, the end of classical colonialism—a policy by which one nation maintains control over a foreign nation and makes use of its resources—left a large number of weak states in its wake. With these two trends working together, opportunities were opened for minorities who were dispossessed in one nation to appeal for support from allies in another nation. It is also important to note that global social movements have been aided by human rights legislation from multistate governments such as the United Nations (Bornstein, 2009).

Critical Thinking Questions 14.2

Think of a social justice issue that you have some passion about. Are there any social movements currently working on this issue? If so, what are they? How open is the political system (in the United States or internationally) to social action about the issue? What types of elite allies might be helpful with opening political opportunities for the issue?

Mobilizing Structures Perspective

Most analysts would agree that much of the success of the living wage movement can be attributed to strong existing networks of local progressive advocates. The movement also benefited from strong advocacy organizations like ACORN that developed and provided resources to grassroots organizers. These views are consistent with the **mobilizing structures (MS) perspective**, which starts from this basic premise: Given their disadvantaged position in the political system, social movement leaders must seek out and mobilize the resources they need—people, money, information, ideas, and skills—in order to reduce the costs and increase the benefits of movement activities. In the MS perspective, social movements have no influence without effective organization of various kinds of **mobilizing structures**—existing informal networks and formal organizations through which people mobilize and engage in collective action. Mobilizing structures are the collective building blocks of social movements. The main ideas of the MS perspective are summarized in Exhibit 14.2.

Exchange and choice perspective

Exhibit 14.2 Key Ideas of the Mobilizing Structures Perspective

- Social movements must be able to mobilize various kinds of formal and informal networks.
- Resource mobilization theory focuses on the coordination of movement activities through social movement organizations (SMOs).
- The network model focuses on mobilization of the movement through informal networks.
- Mobilizing structures have a strong influence on the life course of social movements.
- To survive, social movements must be able to attract new members and sustain the involvement of current members.

Informal and Formal Structures

MS scholars agree that social movements typically do not start from scratch but build on existing structures. They disagree, however, on the relative importance of informal versus formal structures. The MS perspective has two theoretical building blocks, one that emphasizes formal mobilizing structures and another that emphasizes informal mobilizing structures.

Resource mobilization theory focuses on the organization and coordination of movement activities through formal organizations called **social movement organizations (SMOs)** (Davis, McAdam, Scott, & Zald, 2005). Theorists in this tradition are particularly interested in **professional social movement organizations** staffed by leaders and activists who make a professional career out of reform causes (della Porta & Diani, 2006; Morris, 2004). The professional staff engages in fund-raising and attempts to speak for the constituency represented by the movement. There are advantages to professional SMOs, because social movements are more likely to meet their goals when they have a well-structured organization to engage in continuous fund-raising and lobbying. There are also problems, however. Professional SMOs must respond to the wishes of the benefactors who may be comfortable with low-level claims only. Theda Skocpol (2003) argues that professionalization can lead to movement defeat by taming protest. This may explain why the Occupy Wall Street movement (also known as the Occupy movement) was vehemently opposed to a leadership role for SMOs in their movement (Castells, 2012). Della Porta and Diani (2006) remind us that although social movements need organizations, organizations are not social movements. They insist that one thing that distinguishes social movements is that they are linked by dense informal

networks.

Global social movements are being supported by growing numbers of **transnational social movement organizations (TSMOs)**, or social movement organizations that operate in more than one nation-state. The number of TSMOs grew each decade of the 20th century, with particularly rapid growth in the last 3 decades of the century. There were 183 in 1973 and 1,011 in 2003 (Tilly & Wood, 2013). Some examples of TSMOs are Green Peace and Amnesty International.

In contrast to the resource mobilization theory, the **network model** focuses on everyday ties between people, in grassroots settings, as the basic structures for the communication and social solidarity necessary for mobilization (della Porta & Diani, 2006; Tindall, 2004). The focus is thus on naturally existing networks based in family, work, religious, educational, and neighborhood relationships or such networks as those that can be found at alternative cafes and bookshops and social and cultural centers. Naturally existing social networks facilitate recruitment to movement activities and support continued participation. These natural networks are hard to repress and control because, in a democratic society, people have the right to congregate in their private homes and other informal settings.

Some social movement scholars argue that the shift in the organization of work to home-based work, smaller factories, and offshore industrial production is limiting the development of work-based networks of activism. On the other hand, the increased presence of women in higher education and places of employment is facilitating new ties between women. Not only do people get involved in social movements because of previous connections but they also make new connections through their movement activities, connections that may generate continued loyalty. Proponents of the network model emphasize that individual, not just organizational, participation is essential for social movements, and they argue that social movements have participants, not members, and must find ways to keep participants involved. Although the benefits of informal networks are often noted in the social movement literature, some researchers are beginning to explore cases where networks do not lead to participation (della Porta & Diani, 2006; Tindall, 2004).

Although resource mobilization theory and the network model disagree about the relative merits of formal and informal structures, they do agree that the costs of mobilizing social movements are minimized by drawing on preexisting structures and networks (Davis et al., 2005; Tindall, 2004). The

living wage campaign in Baltimore got its start in an existing coalition of religious leaders, and the growing living wage movement was able to generate support from existing social movement organizations and university students. This is very common in the life of social movements. Black churches and Black colleges played an important role in the U.S. civil rights movement (Hutchison, 2012). The student movements of the 1960s benefited from friendship networks among activists of the civil rights movement (Oberschall, 1992). The global justice movement depends on a broad coalition of organizations with a strong background in activism, including trade unions and other worker organizations, ethnic organizations, farmers, religious organizations, consumer groups, environmental groups, women's groups, and youth groups (della Porta & Diani, 2006; Tarrow, 2006). Research indicates that the vast majority of active participants in the Occupy movement in the United States had participated in other social movements and been involved in activist networks on the Internet (Castells, 2012).

Several social movement scholars have noted the particularly “religious roots and character of many American movements” (McAdam et al., 1996, p. 18; Wood, 2002). They suggest that this link is not surprising, given the higher rates of church affiliation and attendance in the United States than in other comparable Western democracies.

Gemma Edwards (2014) argues that the mobilizing structures perspective has not paid enough attention to the relational nature of social movements. Social movement mobilization depends on participants developing a sense of collective identity, and the collective identity becomes the defining nature of the social movement.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Social movement leaders have always made use of new communication technologies to mobilize, using the telephone, radio, television, and computer as they became available (see Exhibit 14.3 for an overview of new communication technologies since the invention of the modern social movement). However, as new communication technologies became available, they did not replace previously existing technologies but were, instead, used alongside them. In recent years, the Internet and wireless communication networks have been used extensively in the mobilization of social movements, and the dynamic force of their use is the primary reason the study of social movements is so hot now. Here are some fascinating

examples of recent use of these technologies to mount social movements around the world.

In May 2007, activists in the southern China city of Xiamen were fighting the construction of a chemical plant in their city. They sent out text messages from their cell phones encouraging recipients to participate in a protest at a particular location on June 1 at 8 a.m. Discussion of the hazards of the chemical plant was taken up by bloggers. On June 1, tens of thousands of protesters marched against the project, uploading photographs, videos, and text messages to blogging sites as they marched. When one blogging site was blocked, another blogger would pick up the material and distribute it. In December 2007, the Chinese government announced that the plant would be moved to another city, Guangzhou. In March 2008, residents of Guangzhou and nearby towns engaged in 3 days of protest against the decision to move the plant to their city. In one nearby town, the protesters staged a sit-in to block traffic on a main road. The local government sent loudspeakers to the street to deny that the plant would be moved to Guangzhou. In 2011, thousands of people used text messaging to organize protests against a similar plant in another part of China, and that plant was closed by local authorities (Tilly & Wood, 2013).

On December 17, 2010, street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi set fire to himself in front of a government building in a small town in Tunisia to protest the constant confiscation of his fruit and vegetables by the local police after he refused to pay them a bribe. A few hours later, hundreds of youth, sharing similar experiences, led a protest in front of the same building. Mohamed's cousin, Ali, recorded the protest and distributed the video over the Internet. A few days later, spontaneous demonstrations were held around the country and continued in spite of brutal repression by the police. When the French government removed its support from the dictator Ben Ali, he and his family fled Tunisia. The protesters were not satisfied, however, and the demonstrations continued. The protesters posted videos (of the protests and police brutality), messages, and songs on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. They used the Twitter hashtag #sidibouazid to debate and communicate. Bloggers played an active role, and Al Jazeera television broadcast images that had been posted on YouTube. The mobilization was not all digital, however. The protesters also occupied the Place du Gouvernement, the site of most government offices, and covered the walls of the government square with slogans. Hundreds of cars converged on the capital. The Tunisian protesters continued their actions throughout 2011 and were rewarded with open elections on October 23, 2011 (Castells, 2012;

Tilly & Wood, 2013).

Exhibit 14.3 A Selected History of the Development of New
Information and Communication Technologies

Year	Technology
1835	Invention of the electric telegraph
1876	Invention of the telephone
1895	Invention of the Marconi radio
1923	Introduction of the first working television system
1962	Launching of the first active communication satellite
1971	First e-mail sent
1973	Introduction of first handheld cell phone
1977	Introduction of microcomputers and the personal computer modem
Early 1990s	Introduction of 2G digital cellular networks, allowing text messaging and access to media content
Mid-1990s	Appearance of first search engines for WWW
1995	Public Internet established in United States
2001	Introduction of 3G cellular networks with faster connectivity
2002	Friendster social networking site (SNS) launched
2004	Facebook launched
2005	YouTube launched
2006	Twitter launched
2007	Tumblr launched
2009	Introduction of 4G cellular telephone networks

Inspired by the action in Tunisia, Asmaa Mafhouz, a business student in Cairo, Egypt, posted a video blog (vlog) on January 18, 2011, asking people to gather on Tahrir Square on January 25. Someone uploaded the vlog to YouTube, and it went viral. Tens of thousands of people converged on Tahrir Square on January 25, and more than 2 million people participated in demonstrations there over time. Demonstrators recorded the protests with their mobile phones and shared the videos on YouTube and Facebook, often with live streaming. They debated and communicated by Facebook, coordinated actions on Twitter, and made extensive use of blogs. Al Jazeera television played a major role in communicating the action to the Egyptian population. From the beginning of the protests, the Egyptian government took action to block social media websites. On January 27, it blocked text messaging and BlackBerry messaging. The protesters responded by using the old technologies of fax machines, ham radio, dial-up modems, and

landlines. Hackers and techies around the world came to the aid of the protesters. Google and Twitter engineers designed a system that automatically converted a voice mail left on an answering machine into a tweet (Castells, 2012; Russell, 2011).

Moving to the United States in 2011, there was widespread outrage about a number of issues: the massive loss of homes and real estate value when the real estate market crashed, the near collapse of the financial system caused by speculation and greed, the use of taxpayer money to bail out the financial institutions, and the payment of huge bonuses to millionaires who had caused the economic collapse—all coming after a presidential campaign that had created great hope among a large portion of the electorate, particularly young adults. This outrage was occurring in the context of energized social movements in other parts of the world, particularly the Arab Spring. On July 13, 2011, Adbusters posted a call on its blog for people to converge on lower Manhattan on September 17 and set up tents, kitchens, and so forth and occupy Wall Street. About 1,000 people showed up, demonstrated against Wall Street, and occupied nearby Zuccotti Park. Videos of police repression were posted on YouTube, which mobilized more protesters to show up. With images and messages spreading across the Internet, occupations developed spontaneously in other cities, with approximately 600 Occupy demonstrations occurring around the country. The message of the movement was spread both internally and externally by Twitter, using the hashtag #occupywallstreet. Twitter networks were used to alert participants when police action was threatened, to distribute other types of information, and to post photos, videos, and comments. Tumblr was used to humanize the movement, by providing a platform for personal, anonymous storytelling. As new Occupy camps developed around the country, most camps created their own websites with sections such as contact, how to get involved, supplies requested, resources, calendar of events and announcements, and message boards. Most camps also had a Facebook group.

Communication scholars suggest that the Internet and wireless communication technologies are a rich resource for social movements because they can be used to bypass mainstream media, which often ignores or distorts movement activity. Manuel Castells (2012), professor of communication technology at the University of Southern California, suggests that these technologies are a source of “mass self-communication,” because the users can control the message they send. His research indicates that YouTube is probably the most powerful mobilizing tool in the early stages

of a movement because the visual images arouse strong emotions in the viewer.

The widespread use of the Internet and wireless communication technologies in social movement mobilization is raising new questions for social movement scholars. Are dense, face-to-face networks still necessary to mobilize social movements? How essential is shared direct experience and face-to-face interaction to keep activists involved? The research on this question is still in the early stages, but evidence suggests that the greatest power comes from connecting virtual relationships with occupation of a shared physical space (Bennett, 2004; Castells, 2012). In recent large-scale social movements, new technologies have been used to call people to gather in specific physical spaces and to occupy those spaces over time. Castells (2012) suggests that these recent movements are creating a new hybrid form of *space*, “a mixture of space of places, in a given territory, and space of flows, on the Internet. One could not function without the other” (pp. 168–169).

The Life Course of Social Movements

Social movements are by definition fluid. The MS perspective asserts that mobilizing structures have a strong influence on the life course of a social movement, making time an important dimension. Although most social movements fade relatively soon, some last for decades. Movements typically have brief periods of intense activity and long latent periods when not much is happening. One pattern for the movements that persist is as follows: At the outset, the movement is ill defined, and the various mobilizing structures are weakly organized (Kriesi, 1996; Marx & McAdam, 1994). Once the movement has been in existence for a while, it is likely to become larger, less spontaneous, and better organized. The mature social movement is typically led by the SMOs developed in the course of mobilization. The living wage movement seems to be in this position currently, with several organizations, including some transnational ones, playing a major role, but it was not always so.

Developmental perspective



Photos 14.3a, b, c Both virtual and face-to-face networks helped to mobilize the Arab Spring protest movements of 2011.

© R. Byhre/Demotix/Corbis; © DYLAN MARTINEZ/Reuters/Corbis; © David Mbiyu/Demotix/Corbis

Social movement scholars disagree about whether the increasing role of formal organizations as time passes is good or bad. Many suggest that movements cannot survive without becoming more organized and taking on many of the characteristics of the institutions they challenge (Tarrow, 2006). On the other hand, this tendency of social movements to become more organized and less spontaneous has often doomed them—particularly poor people’s movements—to failure (Skocpol, 2003). Organizations that become more formal commonly abandon the oppositional tactics that brought early success and fail to seize the window of opportunity created by the unrest those tactics generated. But that is not always the case. Sometimes SMOs become more radical over time, and most current large-scale social movements are strengthened by the support of many types of organizations (della Porta & Diani, 2006). One of the most important problems facing social movement organizers is to create mobilizing structures that are sufficiently strong to stand up to opponents but also flexible enough to respond to changing circumstances (Tarrow, 2006). The living wage movement appears to have managed that tension in its first 2 decades, but it is still a work in progress.

Jo Freeman (1995) asserts that there is “no such thing as a permanent social movement” (p. 403). She suggests that every movement, at some point, changes into something else, often into many other things, through three basic processes:

1. *Institutionalization.* Some movements become part of existing institutions or develop durable SMOs with stable income, staff, and routine operations. The profession of social work is an example of a social movement that became institutionalized.

2. *Encapsulation.* Some social movements, or at least some parts of them, lose their sense of mission and begin to direct their activities inward, to serve members, rather than outward, to promote or resist change. That has been the trajectory of some labor unions (Clemens, 1996). Social work’s history also includes periods of encapsulation, when social workers became more concerned about “professional advancement and autonomy, status, and financial security” than about social justice and the public welfare (Reamer, 1992, p. 12). This appears to be the current state of the social work profession.

3. *Factionalization.* Still other movements fall apart, often disintegrating into contentious, competing factions. This was the trajectory

of the U.S. student protest movements after the violence at the 1968 Democratic Party convention in Chicago (della Porta & Diani, 2006; Tarrow, 1994).

It is too early to tell what the long-term trajectory of the living wage movement will be. One possibility is that it will merge with other movements focused on economic justice.

Critical Thinking Questions 14.3

Think again of a social justice issue you have some passion about. What existing networks might be available to organize change efforts regarding the issue? How could you use—or how have you used—the Internet and wireless communication technologies to participate in action about the issue?

Cultural Framing Perspective

The **cultural framing (CF) perspective** asserts that a social movement can succeed only when participants develop shared understandings and definitions of the situation. These shared meanings develop through a transactional process of consciousness raising, which social movement scholars call cultural framing. **Cultural framing** involves “conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action” (McAdam et al., 1996, p. 6). Exhibit 14.4 summarizes the central ideas of the CF perspective.

Social perspective	constructionist
-----------------------	-----------------

Exhibit 14.4 Key Ideas of the Cultural Framing Perspective

- Social movements must be able to develop shared understandings that legitimate and motivate collective action.
- Social movements actively participate in the naming of grievances and injustices.
- Social movement leaders must construct a perception that change is possible.
- Social movements must articulate goals.
- Social movements must identify and create tactical choices for accomplishing goals.
- Contests over cultural frames are common in social movements.
- Social movements must be able to create cultural frames to appeal to diverse audiences.

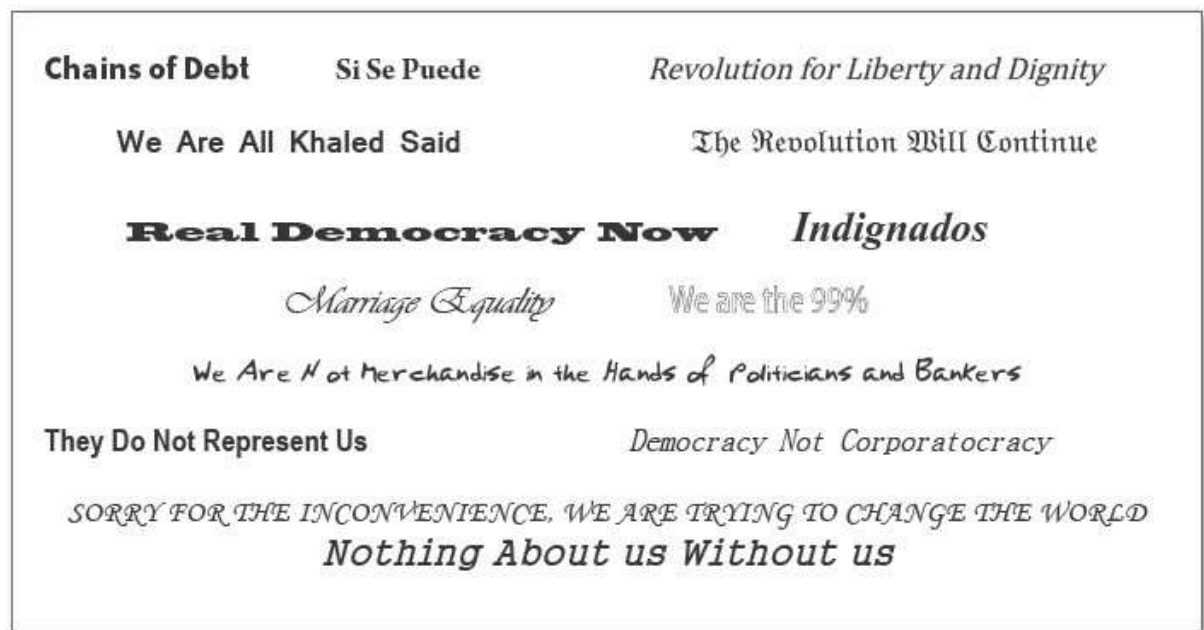
Social movement leaders and participants engage in a delicate balancing act as they construct cultural frames. To legitimate collective action, cultural frames must impel people to feel aggrieved or outraged about some situation they consider unjust. But to motivate people to engage in collective action, cultural frames must be optimistic about the possibilities for improving the situation. Consider the chant developed by the divinity students at Harvard: “Where’s your horror? Where’s your rage? Div School wants a living wage.” The chant dramatized the severity of the situation and the fairness of their cause, but it also expressed hope for a solution. Simultaneously, social movements want to draw heavily on existing cultural symbols so that the movement frame will resonate with people’s cultural understandings while they add new frames to the cultural stock, thus sponsoring new ways of thinking about social conditions. The challenge of this balancing act is “how to put forward a set of unsettling demands for unconventional people in ways that will not make enemies out of potential allies” (Tarrow, 1994, p. 10). The BUILD coalition was wise in choosing to call their cause a “living wage” rather than a “minimum wage.” The notion that workers should draw a wage that allows them to “live” is morally persuasive, and even those who oppose the living wage movement have suggested that it is hard to take a public stance that you are opposed to such an idea (Malanga, 2003).

Cultural frames are “metaphors, symbols, and cognitive cues that cast issues in a particular light and suggest possible ways to respond to these issues” (Davis et al., 2005, pp. 48–49). Exhibit 14.5 presents some cultural frames provided by recent social movements around the world. You may not be familiar with many of these cultural frames, and I suggest you consult the Internet to learn more about those not familiar to you. How well do you

think these cultural frames serve both to legitimate and to motivate collective action?

A complication in the process of constructing frames is that frames attractive to one audience are likely to be rejected by other audiences. Social movement groups “must master the art of simultaneously playing to a variety of publics, threatening opponents, and pressuring the state, all the while appearing nonthreatening and sympathetic to the media and other publics” (McAdam, 1996b, p. 344). Activists have desired media attention because that is the most effective way to reach wide audiences, but they also know they cannot control the way the movement will be framed by the mass media. That is why some social movement scholars see so much promise in the use of the Internet and wireless communication technology that allow participants to control their own messages. The mass media are attracted to dramatic, even violent, aspects of a movement, but these aspects are likely to be rejected by other audiences (Stein, 2009). They are often more interested in scandal than in providing substantive information on movement issues (della Porta & Diani, 2006). ACORN, an SMO that was very helpful to the living wage campaign in the United States, became the subject of a highly publicized scandal in September 2009 regarding a few local staff caught in reportedly unethical behavior on hidden camera (Farrell, 2009). This scandal led to loss of federal funding and private donations, and by March 2010, ACORN announced that it was closing its offices after 40 years of successful advocacy efforts (Urbina, 2010). Indeed, it was their success in fighting for the rights of poor people that led to a backlash from conservative forces that wanted to destroy them. That is a possibility with which successful social movements must always contend. It is not clear how ACORN’s demise has affected the living wage movement.

Exhibit 14.5 Cultural Frames Used in Recent Social Movements
Around the World



Movement activists are particularly concerned about the impact of the mass media on their **conscience constituency**—people attracted to the movement because it appears just and worthy, not because they will benefit personally. The students at Harvard gave serious thought to whether a sit-in demonstration would cause them to lose some support for their cause. They also were aware that they could face repercussions, such as being expelled from the university.

Social movement framing is never a matter of easy consensus building, and intense **framing contests** may arise among a variety of actors, particularly in the later stages. Representatives of the political system and participants in countermovements influence framing through their own actions and public statements, and internal conflicts may become more pronounced. Leaders and followers often have different frames for the movement (Marx & McAdam, 1994), and there are often splits between moderate and radical participants. It is not at all unusual for movements to put forth multiple frames, with different groups sponsoring different frames. For example, Bill Hughes (2009) suggests that disability activism in the United Kingdom is splitting into two branches, the disabled people's movement (DPM) and the "biological citizens." The DPM takes the position that disability is a social phenomenon created by discrimination and oppression and suggests that impairment is irrelevant to disability. The "biological citizens" organize politically around specific diagnostic labels and embrace medical and scientific knowledge associated with their "condition," with the goal of enhancing their ability to exercise citizenship. When a movement captures mass media attention, there is often an intense

struggle over who speaks for the movement and which cultural frame is put forward.

Qualitative analysis of social movement framing has been a popular topic in the social movement literature in recent years. This literature indicates that cultural framing provides language, ideology, and symbols for understanding that a problem exists, recognizing windows of opportunity, establishing goals, and identifying pathways for action (Polletta, 2004).

Frames for Understanding That a Problem Exists

Social movements are actively involved in the “naming” of grievances and injustices. They do so in part by drawing on existing cultural symbols, but they also underscore, accentuate, and enlarge current understanding of the seriousness of a situation. In essence, they call attention to contradictions between cultural ideals and cultural realities. For example, the living wage movement calls attention to the discrepancy between working and receiving a wage that does not allow a person to rise out of poverty. Calling attention to this discrepancy is important in the United States, where the public tends to believe that people are poor because they don’t work. The international antiglobalization movement has used “globalization” as a catchword to symbolize the misery and exploitation caused by the dominance of market forces in contemporary life. Many of the ill effects of global markets, such as growing inequality, were present before antiglobalization activists were able to turn “globalization” into a negative symbol that could mobilize people to action. When 50,000 demonstrators protested against the WTO meeting in Seattle on November 30, 1999, they used a number of slogans to frame globalization as a problem (della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 163):

- The world is not for sale.
- No globalization without representation.
- We are citizens, not only consumers.
- WTO = Capitalism without conscience.

Some of these themes have been echoed in slogans of more recent social movements, as demonstrated in Exhibit 14.5.

In the United States, movement frames are often articulated in terms of rights—civil rights, disability rights, GLBT rights, animal rights, children’s rights. In Europe, where there is less emphasis on individual liberty, rights

frames are far less common in social movements (Hastings, 1998; Tarrow, 1998). Recently, equality has been a powerful frame in the United States: “We are the 99%” and “Marriage Equality.” The GLBT rights movement made the wise choice to use equality as the slogan as they pushed for same-sex marriage rights.

In the past 2 decades, fundamentalist religious movements have sprung up in many countries, including the United States. These movements have used morality frames, focusing on good and evil rather than justice versus injustice. Compared with Europe, the United States has historically produced a high number of such movements (Marx & McAdam, 1994). Prohibition, abolition, anticommunism, and antiabortionism have all had religious roots. A contemporary religious frame that crosses national boundaries as well as liberal and conservative ideologies is “reverence for life,” expressed in such disparate movements as the environmental, health, antiabortion, animal rights, antiwar, and anti-capital punishment movements.



Photo 14.4 The Occupy Wall Street movement uses the slogan “We are the 99%” to have an impact on the public discourse about democracy and economic justice.

Frames for Recognizing a Window of Opportunity

The perception of opportunity to change a troublesome situation is also culturally framed, to some extent (Castells, 2014; della Porta & Diani, 2006). On occasion, it is easy to develop a shared frame that opportunity exists or does not exist, but most situations are more ambiguous. Social movement leaders must successfully construct a perception that change is possible, because an opportunity does not exist unless it is recognized. They typically attempt to overcome concerns about the dangers and futility of activism by focusing on the risks of inaction, communicating a sense of urgency, and emphasizing the openness of the moment. They are intent on keeping hope alive.

Calibrating this type of frame is a difficult task. On the one hand, overstating an opportunity can be hazardous. Without “fortifying myths,” which allow participants to see defeats as mere setbacks, unrealistically high expectations can degenerate into pessimism about possibilities for change (Voss, 1996). On the other hand, “movement activists systematically overestimate the degree of political opportunity, and if they did not, they would not be doing their job wisely” (Gamson & Meyer, 1996, p. 285). Unrealistic perceptions about what is possible can actually make change *more* possible. The Harvard students were not happy with the size of the worker raise that came out of their sit-in, but their expectations led them to bold action, which brought some improvements in the lives of workers and has been an inspiration for students at other universities around the country.

Frames for Establishing Goals

Once it has been established that both problem and opportunity exist, the question of social movement goals arises. Is change to be narrow or sweeping, reformist or revolutionary? Will the emphasis be on providing opportunities for individual self-expression or on changing the social order? At least three goals have been adopted by different segments of the antiglobalization movement: rejection, opt out, and reform. The rejectionists reject capitalism as an ethical economic form. The “opt out” segment of the movement focuses on experiments in local sustainable economic development, which they hope will allow them to avoid participation in the global economic system dominated by large, transnational companies. The reformists see economic globalization as a potentially good thing but favor measures to reduce the power of transnational businesses (della Porta &

Diani, 2006). U.S. social movements have generally set goals that are more reformist than revolutionary (Marx & McAdam, 1994). PFLAG National, the nation's largest organization of parents, families and allies united with LGBTQ people, is a fairly typical example of a contemporary U.S. social movement organization that has struck a balance between goals of individual change and changes in the social order. Exhibit 14.6 demonstrates how PFLAG strikes this balance in its statement of goals.

Typically, goals are poorly articulated in the early stages of a movement but are clarified through ongoing negotiations about the desired changes. Manuals for social activism suggest that modest and winnable objectives in the early stages of a movement help to reinforce the possibility of change (Gamson & Meyer, 1996). Indeed, the early goals for the living wage movement were quite modest. The wage increase secured by BUILD only covered 1,500 to 2,000 workers. By 2001, it was estimated that the combined efforts of all local living wage campaigns had brought the number to only about 100,000 workers. Some progressives were critical of a movement that was yielding so little, but other analysts argued that it was the modest and winnable nature of the early campaigns that neutralized opposition and built a momentum of success (Murray, 2001). Certainly, it is true that the movement has become more ambitious in its goals over time, moving from improving the wages of a small number of municipal contract workers to large-scale, citywide ordinances, as well as to statewide minimum wage laws. Likewise, the European activists' demands that all garment workers in retail supply chains be paid a living wage would have far-reaching results across national lines (Clean Clothes Campaign, 2009).

Exhibit 14.6 Goals Statement of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)

- One. Build the capacity of our organization at every level so that we may have all the resources, in the form of information, people and funding, necessary to move forward in our work with the greatest possible effect.
- Two. Create a world in which our young people may grow up and be educated with freedom from fear of violence, bullying and other forms of discrimination, regardless of their real or perceived gender identity or sexual orientation or that of their families.
- Three. Make our vision and our message accessible to the broadest range of ethnic and cultural communities, ending the isolation of families with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender family members within those communities.
- Four. Work toward full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons within their chosen communities of faith.
- Five. Create a society in which all LGBT persons may openly and safely pursue the career path of their choice, and may be valued and encouraged to grow to their full potential in the workplace.
- Six. Create a society in which all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons may enjoy, in every aspect of their lives, full civil and legal equality and may participate fully in all the rights, privileges and obligations of full citizenship in this country.

SOURCE: PFLAG, 2014.

Social workers Ray MacNair, Leigh Fowler, and John Harris (2000) suggest that progressive, or proactive, social movements have a three-pronged goal: (1) They must confront oppression, (2) they must attend to the damaged identities of oppressed persons, and (3) they must “renovate” the cultural roles of both oppressor groups and oppressed groups. The living wage movement has paid a lot of attention to the first two of these goals. It has named the oppression, and it has actively engaged low-wage earners in the struggle. It is not clear how much work is being done on the third goal, but the European activists for the garment workers may well be thinking in those terms.

Three “identity movements”—the Black civil rights movement, the women’s movement, and the lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender movement—demonstrate the process of goal setting (MacNair et al., 2000). Each of these movements has a long history of emerging, waning, and reemerging in the United States, changing its framing of the movement’s goals along the way. For these three social movements, the framing of goals followed an evolutionary path through six frames:

1. *Assimilation*. Persuade the mainstream to recognize the capabilities of the oppressed group while also working to uplift the oppressed group.
2. *Normative antidiscrimination*. Place the onus for change completely on oppressor groups and oppressive institutions. Take a confrontational approach of legal challenges and political lobbying. Recognize the positive attributes of the oppressed group.
3. *Militant direct action*. Reject the legitimacy of normal decision-making processes and attempt to disrupt them. Develop a “culture of rebellion” to energize disruptive actions (MacNair et al., 2000, p. 75).
4. *Separatism*. Avoid oppression by avoiding oppressor groups.
5. *Introspective self-help*. Focus on building a healthy identity.
6. *Pluralistic integration*. Appreciate themselves and promote connections to other cultures.

Before we leave the discussion of goal framing, it is important to consider the position on goals taken by the Occupy movement. One demand

was put forward in the beginning, a presidential commission to separate money from politics, but that did not become the unifying goal of the movement. Each Occupy camp site developed its own proposals, or no proposal at all (Tarrow, 2011). The movement has been criticized for having no clear goal or goals, but George Lakoff (2011) aptly described the Occupy movement as a moral movement whose aim was to have an impact on the public discourse about democracy and economic justice. It appears that the movement had some success in this regard, stimulating greater public dialogue about a number of issues related to democracy and justice, including the issue of fair wages. Public opinion polls taken in November 2011 indicate that almost 50% of the public agreed with the ideas at the heart of the movement (Castells, 2012).

Frames for Identifying Pathways for Action

Some of the most important framing efforts of a social movement involve tactical choices for accomplishing goals. Social movement scholars generally agree that each society has a repertoire of forms of collective action that are familiar to social movement participants as well as the elites they challenge (Tarrow, 2006). New forms are introduced from time to time, and they spread quickly if they are successful. In the United States, for example, marches on Washington have come to be standard fare in collective action, and activist groups exchange information on the logistics of organizing such a march on the nation's capital. On the other hand, the sit-down strike is no longer as common as it once was, but occupying a physical space over time has been a hallmark of recent social movements. Contemporary social movements draw power from the large selection of forms of collective action currently in the cultural stock, and many movements have wisely used multiple forms of action (della Porta & Diani, 2006; Tarrow, 2006). The living wage movement has made use of lobbying, postcard campaigns, door-knocking campaigns, leafleting, rallies, sit-ins, workshops, newspaper ads, and advocacy videos.

The repertoire of collective action is handed down, but there is some improvisation by individual movements. For example, public marches are a standard part of the repertoire, but there have been innovations to the march in recent years, such as closing rallies and the incorporation of theatrical forms. Participants in the global justice movement are using some long-standing action forms such as petitions, reports and press releases, sit-ins, marches, lobbying, blockades, and boycotts. They are also using recent

action innovations as well as developing new action forms. Their repertoire includes concerts, vigils, theatrical masks, puppets, electronic advocacy, documentaries, and “buycotts” (active campaign to buy the products) of fair trade products. Computer technology has been used in two forms of disruptive action. *Net striking* is an action form in which a large number of people connect to the same website at a prearranged time. This jams the site and makes it impossible for other users to reach it. *Mailbombing* is an action form in which large numbers of e-mails are sent to a web address or a server until it overloads (della Porta & Diani, 2006).

Just as social movement goals fall on a continuum from reform to revolution, forms of collective action can be arranged along a continuum from conventional to violent, as shown in Exhibit 14.7. Nonviolent forms of collective action are the core of contemporary U.S. movements, and nonviolence as a way of life was a cornerstone of the camp sites of the Occupy movement. Nonviolent disruption of routine activities is today considered the most powerful form of activism in the United States and in other Western democracies with relatively stable governments (della Porta & Diani, 2006). The power of nonviolent disruption is that it creates uncertainty and some fear of violence yet provides authorities in democratic societies with no valid argument for repression. Violent collective action, on the other hand, destroys public support for the movement. Martin Luther King was ingenious in recognizing that the best path for the U.S. civil rights movement was “successfully courting violence while restraining violence in his followers” (McAdam, 1996b, p. 349). Consequently, it was the police who lost public favor for their brutality, not the demonstrators.

Exhibit 14.7 Forms of Collective Action

Resilience. How quickly we recover from negative emotions.

Outlook. The duration of our positive emotions.

Context. The degree to which we modulate our emotional responses in a manner appropriate to the context (for example, not directly taking out our work-related anger on the boss).

Social intuition. Our sensitivity to social cues, including all verbal and nonverbal expressions, that reflect our ability to understand and empathize with other people's emotional worlds.

Self-awareness. The extent to which we are aware of emotional signals within our own bodies and minds. The more aware we are of our emotions, the better we will manage them.

Attention. The extent to which we can focus our attention on one thing at a time rather than becoming easily distracted.

Some action forms, such as marches, petitions, and Net strikes, are used

to demonstrate numerical strength. Other action forms, such as conferences, concerts, documentaries, and boycotts of fair products, are used to bear witness to the substantive issues. Still other action forms are designed to do damage to the parties reputed to be to blame for an unfair situation. Small-scale violence does this, as do boycotts. Not only do these latter action forms run the risk of escalating repression and alienating sympathizers, but boycotts also run the risk of harming workers (della Porta & Diani, 2006).

In an interesting development, a new organizing tactic has been used in peace and justice campaigns. The proponents of this tactic call it “creative play.” They argue that “changing entrenched systems of oppression requires shifts in emotional as well as intellectual attitudes” (Shepard, 2005, p. 52). Furthermore, “culture-poems, songs, paintings, murals, chants, sermons, quilts, stories, rhythms, weavings, pots, and dances can make such emotional and visceral breakthroughs possible” (Si Kahn, 1995, cited in Shepard, 2005, p. 52). One global movement, Reclaim the Streets (RTS), used street parties as its organizing tool. During the 2004 presidential election, Billionaires for Bush used humor to lampoon the role of money in U.S. politics. They appeared at both pro-Bush and anti-Bush rallies in tuxedos and top hats, and fake jewels and gowns, often carrying signs that read “Because Inequality Is Not Growing Fast Enough.” Paul Bartlett, a member of the Billionaires group, suggests that “Performance with humor can disarm fear. When we laugh, we can listen, we can learn. . . . When people participate in a play, opportunities for new perspectives and transformation emerge” (cited in Shepard, 2005, p. 55).

Social movement scholars agree that for the past 200 years, social movement actions have become less violent (Tarrow, 2006). They also suggest, however, that beginning in the 1990s, violent social movements began to flourish again around the world. This trend was exemplified by White supremacist armed militias in the United States and militant Islamic fundamentalist movements in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa. Out of these two movements have come (respectively) the bombing of a state building in Oklahoma City and the somber events of September 11, 2001. It is unclear whether the increased violence of social movements will be a long-term trend and if so, whether existing theories of social movements will be relevant to the new forms of movement actions. The 2011 democracy movements in Tunisia and Egypt as well as the Occupy movement were nonviolent and experimented with new ways of peaceful protest. Perhaps the future will hold both increased violence and further experiments with nonviolent protest.

Emerging Perspectives

Some social movement scholars have suggested that the three dominant perspectives discussed—political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framing—fail to attend to some important dimensions of social movements. Two emerging perspectives are discussed here.

Psychodynamic perspective

First, a few social movements scholars are arguing that social movement researchers should take another look at the role of emotions in motivating people to participate in social movement activities. They contend that the social movement literature has fallen short by attending to rationality but not emotions of movement participants. Drawing on recent neuroscience research about the role of emotion in human behavior, Manuel Castells (2012) theorizes that the energy of a social movement “starts with the transformation of emotion into action” (p. 13). He suggests that anger is the triggering emotion in social activism, and extreme anger or outrage helps to override fear of the consequences of action. Enthusiasm and hope, which are generated in social interaction, also play an important role in overriding the fear of activism. Visual images are powerful stimulants of both anger and hope.

Deborah Gould (2004) applauds the rejection of earlier attempts to understand social movement actors in terms of psychopathologies but suggests that social movements are passionate political processes and emotions must be considered. She proposes that social movement researchers should study the role that emotions such as anger, indignation, hope, and pride play in motivating social movement involvement. She recounts her own qualitative research with lesbians and gays who participated in the AIDS activism group ACT UP, noting the important role that grief and anger about AIDS and the slow response to it played in moving participants to action. In another analysis, Karen Stanbridge and J. Scott Kenney (2009) suggest that victims’ rights advocates must manage the grief, fear, and anger related to the victim experience in their public protest action.

When reconsidering the living wage campaign, it seems that these

scholars have a point. Certainly, it appears that Greg Halpern was touched emotionally as well as intellectually by the stories he heard from workers at Harvard. The divinity students who participated in the vigil chanted, “Where’s your horror? Where’s your rage?” Perhaps they were thinking that such strong emotions move people to action. We know that the religious leaders who started the action in Baltimore were angry at the plight of the working poor. This raises an important question for social movement leaders: Should they appeal to both emotional and intellectual understandings of injustice? If so, what are the best methods to do this?

Second, Richard Flacks (2004) suggests that the literature on resource mobilization has failed to consider the fundamental differences in the way different members participate in social movements. He asserts that there may be very different explanations for the participation of leaders, organizers, and mass participants. He thinks we should be more interested in why some people come to see societal change as a major priority in their lives while others don’t and suggests that social movement scholars should study the biographies of activists to learn more about that. Studs Terkel was an activist, not a social movement scholar, but he was interested in exactly the same question that Flacks raises. For Terkel’s (2003) book *Hope Dies Last*, he interviewed 55 activists about what motivated them to activism. As the title of the book indicates, he found hope to be a major motivator.

From another perspective, Robert Putnam (2000) notes that many people are participating at a very superficial level in contemporary social movements, responding to direct mail campaigns with a one-time contribution but making no greater commitment to the cause. Putnam argues that this type of involvement in social movements fails to build the social capital built in grassroots coalitions like those driving the living wage movement. There are, indeed, different ways to participate in social movements, and social movement leaders need to understand the different motivations involved.

Critical Thinking Questions 14.4

Think again of a social justice issue about which you have some passion. What are two or three cultural frames that would motivate people to engage in collective action on the issue? Review the cultural frames of recent social movements presented in Exhibit 14.5. Could any

of those frames be extrapolated to motivate action on the issue about which you have some passion? How important do you think emotions are in motivating people to participate in social movement activity? Which, if any, of the cultural frames presented in Exhibit 14.5 arouse strong emotions in you? What types of emotions do they arouse?

SOCIAL MOVEMENT OUTCOMES

Because social movements are processes, not structures, they are not easy to research. The case study has been the predominant method used, with recent emphasis on comparative case studies. Unfortunately, one researcher may declare a particular movement a failure, while another researcher will see it as having succeeded. Often the impact of a movement cannot be determined until well past its heyday. Different analyses may be based, in part, on different guidelines for success, but the researchers may also be evaluating the movement from different time perspectives. This is a reminder, again, of the importance of the time dimension in changing person–environment configurations.

Like other human endeavors, social movements are neither completely successful nor completely unsuccessful. In general, however, the most successful social movements have outcomes far less radical than their proponents would like and far more radical than their opponents would like. Social movements rarely produce the major redistribution of power that activists desire and movement goals specify. The women's movement has not achieved its goal of equality and nondiscrimination for women. The conservative Christian movement has not reached its goal of restoring traditional family and gender roles. And yet social movements do have an effect on society. Thus, their success should perhaps be measured not by their survival but by the institutional changes they influence. For example, should any credit be given to the living wage movement for the 2007, 2008, and 2009 federal minimum wage increases in the United States? For minimum wage increases in a large number of states? These are hard questions to answer.

Sidney Tarrow (1998) suggests that the power of social movements is cumulative and can be appreciated only from a long-term historical perspective. Many of the gains of social movements get reversed, but “they often leave behind incremental expansions in participation, changes in

popular culture, and residual movement networks” (p. 202). Castells (2012) suggests that the real legacy of a social movement is the cultural change it produces. Research on social movements documents a range of direct and indirect effects. Contemporary social movements have accomplished an impressive list of specific federal legislation, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX, the federal law that prohibits gender-based discrimination in athletics and educational programs at institutions that receive federal funds; and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Considered by some scholars to be the most successful social movement in the United States since World War II, the Black civil rights movement has served as an organizing model, opened opportunities, and provided hope for other aggrieved groups. Because of social movements, the political system has become more open and responsive to previously ignored groups, and voicing grievances has become an expected part of life in a democratic country. New decision-making bodies, such as ad hoc committees and new governmental ministries, have been created in many nations (della Porta & Diani, 2006). Many SMOs have become a stable part of the social environment, and activist-oriented networks outlast the movements that spawned them. Research indicates that although individual activists are often temporarily disillusioned at the end of a social movement, in the long term, they are empowered and politicized by their participation (Tarrow, 1998).

Although the success of a given social movement depends on its unique configuration of political opportunities, mobilizing efforts, and cultural frames, social movement researchers have identified some factors that influence success or failure. Some of these factors are outside the control of the movement, but some of them can be successfully manipulated by movement leaders. The most obvious factor is the ability to attract a large number of participants. The most successful movements tap into existing networks and associations that have a shared culture, a strong sense of solidarity, and a common identity. These groups are the most likely to be willing to make sacrifices and remain committed over time and to have the shared symbols to frame the movement. Religious movements, for example, benefit from long-lasting and widely cherished religious symbols. Other forces, however, can serve as serious threats to the success of a social movement. Internal conflicts and factionalism weaken the chances for success, as does a strong opponent. Initial successes may stimulate strong countermovements, or a backlash may develop in reaction to the radical flank of a movement.

SOCIAL MOVEMENT TRENDS

Social movement scholars generally agree that social movements will continue to be a part of the social landscape in the foreseeable future (McMichael, 2012). In fact, some have predicted that we are entering an era of “movement societies,” in which challenge and disruption of institutional arrangements will become a routine part of life (Tarrow, 2006). Della Porta and Diani (2006) predict that the antiglobalization movement will become a new political force in the world. They also see a trend toward the return of working-class movements and “mobilization by the dispossessed” (p. viii). They suggest that this may be happening because the size of social groups that lack full citizenship is growing around the world.

Tarrow (2006) suggests that the extraordinary international protests of the late 1990s and beginning years of the 21st century represent something new on the planet. Indeed, as suggested earlier, there has been a rapid expansion of TSMOs (McMichael, 2012). TSMOs have developed primarily in the areas of human rights, women’s rights, environmental protection, antiglobalization, and peace (McMichael, 2012). One benefit of TSMOs is that they can include people who speak out about an issue in one country while people are silenced in other countries. TSMOs rarely use violent, or even seriously disruptive, methods. Many observers suggest that given the globalization of the economy, any successful labor challenge to growing inequality will have to be international in scope, and there is evidence that this is, indeed, happening. That is one aim of the antiglobalization movement, which is made up of a collection of labor activists as well as environmentalists and feminists (McMichael, 2012).

Another strong trend that began in the 1990s was a shift from single-issue organizing to multi-issue organizing by TSMOs (Tarrow, 2006). Traditionally, social movements and the SMOs that supported them focused tightly on a single issue, such as poverty or gender equality. The majority of TSMOs still focus on single issues, but the number of multi-issue TSMOs doubled in the 1990s, growing twice as fast as the overall TSMO population (Davis et al., 2005). Increasingly, for example, TSMOs are bridging labor issues with such other issues as the environment, gender equality, peace, and global justice (della Porta & Diani, 2006).

Finally, it seems likely that the trend of blending technology-based organizing with face-to-face interactions in occupied spaces will continue and perhaps escalate. As we have noted at other points in this book,

technological inventions are coming at a fast clip, and it is impossible to foresee what new communication technologies will be used in future social movement mobilization. Given the time it takes to get a book like this into your hands, it is highly likely that you are aware of the use of new technologies not discussed in this chapter.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL WORK

Early in this chapter, I suggested that the professionalization of social work was accomplished by sacrificing the social reform fervor of its settlement house tradition. Some social movement scholars have found it difficult, if not impossible, to be both a profession and a reform movement (Freeman, 1995). Other social work scholars see a dual focus on professional service and social reform as achievable and even natural. The history of social work is one of tension between the goal of professional service and the goal of social reform. This tension has been quite obvious in recent years. On the one hand, social workers and their professional organizations have devoted a lot of resources to obtaining licensure for clinical social workers and to securing private and public reimbursement for clinical social work services. On the other hand, social work's leading professional organizations have in recent times revised documents, including the NASW Code of Ethics and CSWE's Curriculum Policy Statement, to add forceful language about the social justice goals of the profession.

Philip Popple (1992) suggests that each generation of social workers must struggle anew with the tension between a conservative mandate from society for efficient service that manages problems of dependency and a liberal or radical mandate from the profession to promote social justice. He also suggests that social workers experience this tension differently in different political eras. In conservative political times, there is great disparity between the societal mandate for social workers to act as social control agents and the profession's social reform tradition. In such times, the social reform goal is not prominent. In liberal political times, however, there is less tension between the two goals, and social work's social reform goal is more visible. Popple's analysis is consistent with a tenet of the PO perspective on social movements: Shifts in political alignments open or close opportunities for social movement activity. Even though the social work profession's emphasis on social reform at any given time is influenced by political opportunities, the valuing of social justice is a permanent

feature of social work in the United States (Poppo, 1992). Thus, all social workers should be familiar with developments in social movement theory and research.

Some social workers practice in **social movement service organizations (SMSOs)**, also known as *social movement agencies*, *alternative social agencies*, and *hybrid organizations*, which pursue social change while delivering services (Meyer, 2010). These organizations make a fundamental commitment both to social service provision and to advocacy efforts. They often attempt to provide revolutionary services oriented toward empowerment and cognitive liberation. Their advocacy efforts are often focused on reframing public understanding of social problems and their solutions. For example, SMSOs serving homeless persons have attempted to reframe homelessness as being a consequence of failed housing policies, rather than a consequence of individual failings. Likewise, rape crisis centers have focused on gaining public affirmation that rape is not the victim's fault (Hasenfeld, 2010b).

Megan Meyer (2010) identifies five characteristics of SMSOs:

1. They are driven by controversial values that they see as socially beneficial.
2. They closely integrate service provision and advocacy roles.
3. They develop a close sense of community among their clients.
4. They often mobilize their members to advocate for change.
5. They typically develop a hybrid structure that incorporates elements of both collective and bureaucratic forms of operation.

Some examples of SMSOs are feminist health and rape crisis centers, peace and conflict resolution organizations, and national women's and racial minority organizations. Unfortunately, there is very little research on SMSOs, and our knowledge of them and their impact is limited.

Critics of existing social movement theory have suggested that SMOs can be divided into a reform or moderate tradition and a radical tradition (Fitzgerald & Rodgers, 2000). Radical social movement organizations tend to be organized nonhierarchically and operate with little structure. Their goal is usually radical change in social institutions, rather than social reform. Exhibit 14.8 contrasts the characteristics of moderate and radical SMOs. As you can see, existing social movement theories are a better fit with moderate SMOs than with radical SMOs (Fitzgerald & Rodgers,

2000).

This model helps us understand the dimensions of contemporary SMOs but does not capture their changing trajectories over time. After studying six feminist SMOs, Cheryl Hyde (2000) suggested that many social movement agencies fall somewhere between the moderate and radical SMO. The six agencies she studied had begun as grassroots organizations with traits consistent with the description of radical SMOs. They changed in varying ways over the years, however, falling on a continuum from moderate to radical at the point she studied them.

We are living in a time of growing inequality, distrust of governments, hot spots of ethnic hatred, and activism based on social identity. It is easy to get overwhelmed and feel powerless about the situations we confront. Social movement theory is an important ingredient in our social work survival kit. It helps us see, as the title of Sidney Tarrow's (1998) book suggests, that there is "power in movement." It provides a conceptual base to reinvigorate our social reform mission. We may take inspiration from some contemporary examples of courage and conviction that led to social change:

- Rosa Parks, a tired seamstress on a public bus, helped launch the U.S. civil rights movement (Sernau, 2014).
- C. P. Ellis, a former Ku Klux Klan leader, started action that changed the racial climate of an entire community (Terkel, 1980).
- Craig Kielburger, a 12-year-old Canadian boy, began an international movement, Free the Children, to end child labor after reading a story about child workers in Pakistan (Sernau, 2014).

Exhibit 14.8 Characteristics of Moderate and Radical SMOs

	Moderate SMOs	Radical SMOs
Internal structure	Hierarchical leadership; formal bureaucratic organization; development of large membership base for resource generation	Nonhierarchical leadership; participatory democratic organization; egalitarian; "membership" based on involvement; indigenous leadership
Ideology	Reform agenda; emphasis on being a contender in the existing political system; national focus	Radical agenda; emphasis on structural change; flexible ideology; radical networks; global consciousness
Tactics	Nonviolent legal action	Nonviolent direct action; mass actions; innovative tactics
Communication	Mainstream media and communication channels	Either ignored or misrepresented by mainstream media; reliance on alternative forms of communication (music, street theater, pamphlets, newsletters, digital technology, cell phones, text messaging)
Assessment of success	Measured in terms of reform of existing political/economic system; longevity	Measured in terms of contribution to larger radical agenda; subject to intense opposition and government surveillance; may be purposefully short-lived

SOURCE: Based on Fitzgerald & Rodgers, 2000, Table 1.

- In 1999, college students around the United States began a boycott of Reebok sports shoes, prompting improved conditions in that company's Indonesian factories (Ivins, 1999).
- After the three major Icelandic banks collapsed in 2008, the "kitchenware revolution" called for the government to resign and for new elections to be held. With pressure from the streets, the new government nationalized the three major banks, compensated consumers for the loss of their savings, and arrested leading figures in the banking sector (Castells, 2012).

These are just a few of the empowering stories we can recall in our most discouraged moments to give us hope.

Critical Thinking Questions 14.5

Do you see the goals of professional service and social reform as incompatible or as dual goals that can be fruitfully integrated? How prominent do you think the social reform goal is in the social work profession now? What factors do you think are influencing the current emphasis (or lack of emphasis) on social reform by the profession? How important are social movements in the search for social justice?