



A social movement that only moves people is merely a revolt. A movement that changes both people and institutions is a revolution.

Martin Luther King Jr

# Social Movements in a Democratic Society



# What Are Social Movements?

- **social movements**: loosely organized collections of people and groups who act over time, outside established institutions, to promote or resist social change ... do not have to be formally organized
  - example: Christian Conservative Movement has resisted the secularization (the spread for nonreligious values) of American life.
- Multiple alliances may work separately for common causes and still be considered a social movement.
- A distinction is drawn between social movements and **social movement organizations** (SMOs). A social movement organization is a formally organized component of a social movement. But an SMO may only make up a part of a particular social movement.
- Social movements differ from political parties and interest groups in their focus on broad society-wide issues and their tendency to act outside the normal channels of government and politics.





# What Are Social Movements?

- characteristics of social movements
  - inevitable, only rate varies
  - sometimes intentional, often unplanned
  - generally the political instruments of political outsiders ... help people who are outside the mainstream gain a hearing from the public and political decision makers
  - generally mass grassroots phenomena ... Outsiders and excluded groups lack financial and political resources and must take advantage of what they have.
  - often use unconventional and disruptive tactics to gain attention ... controversial
  - populated by individuals with a shared sense of grievance
  - difficult to organize and sustain
  - often generate interest group organizations

# Classifying Social Movements



- Social movements can be classified by the **impact** they have on and the **response** they get from the larger society.
  - low-impact
  - repressed
  - partially successful
  - successful





# Low-Impact Social Movements

- few followers and activists
- little support among the general public
- unable to significantly affect everyday life or the election prospects of politicians
- can be the result of the formation of a powerful countermovement

# Repressed Social Movements



- Social movements committed to **radical changes** in society and the economy or that include **violence** tend to threaten widely shared values and the interests of the powerful. They rarely gain widespread popular support and often face repression of some sort.
  - **Great Railroad Strike of 1877**: 67,000 national guardsmen were mobilized in 10 states to break the first national railroad strike.
  - **Homestead Strike (1892)**: Industrial lockout by and strike against Carnegie Steel led to a battle between strikers and private security agents, followed by the mobilization of 10,000 militia men, the arrest of 16 strike leaders on conspiracy charges and the indictment of 27 labor leaders for treason. (Juries would convict none of the men.)
  - radical branch of the student antiwar movement

PA national guard march  
on Homestead



# Partially Successful Social Movements



- Some social movements have enough power and public support to generate a **favorable response** from public officials but not enough to force them to go very far.
- Government may **respond in a partial or half-hearted way**.
  - anti-poverty measures
  - Christian conservatives and abortion
  - gay and lesbian issues

# Successful Social Movements

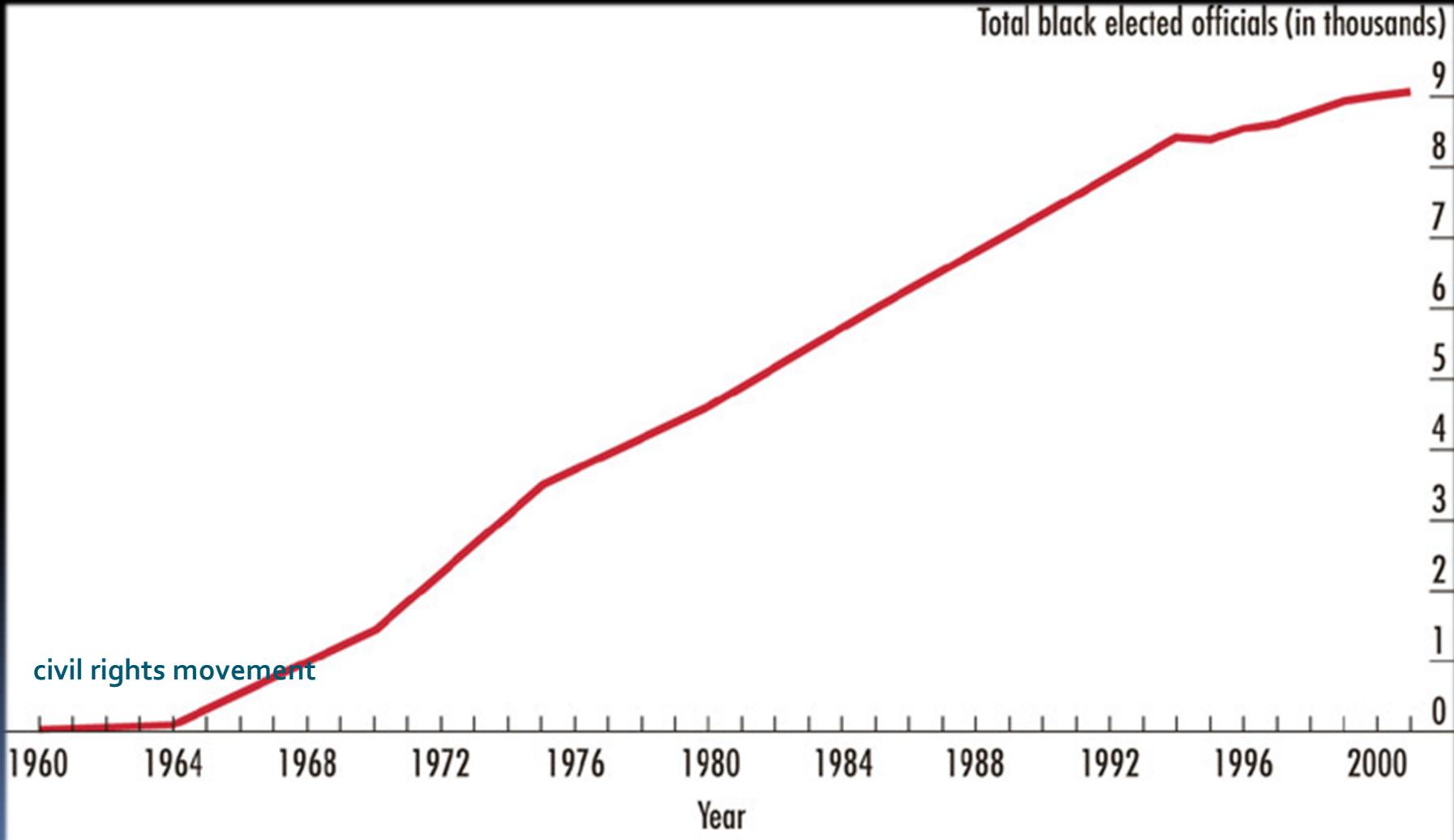


- have many supporters, wide public sympathy, do not challenge the basics of the economic and social order, wield some electoral clout
  - women's suffrage movement
  - civil rights movement
- signs of success
  - legislation and Constitutional amendments
  - increased respect for members of the movement
  - changes in fundamental underlying values
  - increased representation in decision-making bodies
- the most successful movements
  - goals are consistent with values of society
  - wide popular support
  - fit needs of political leaders





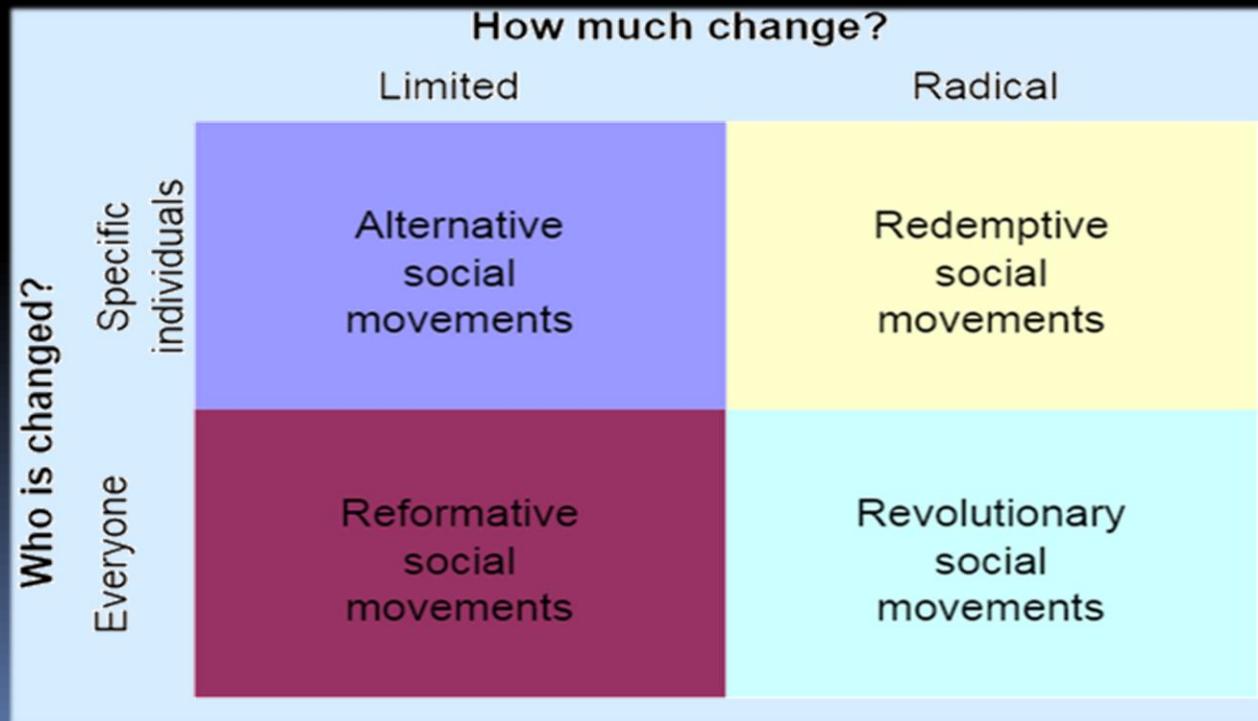
# Number of Elected Black Officials, 1960-2000





# Classifying Social Movements

- Social movements can also be classified based on:
  - Who is the movement attempting to change?
  - How much change is being advocated?





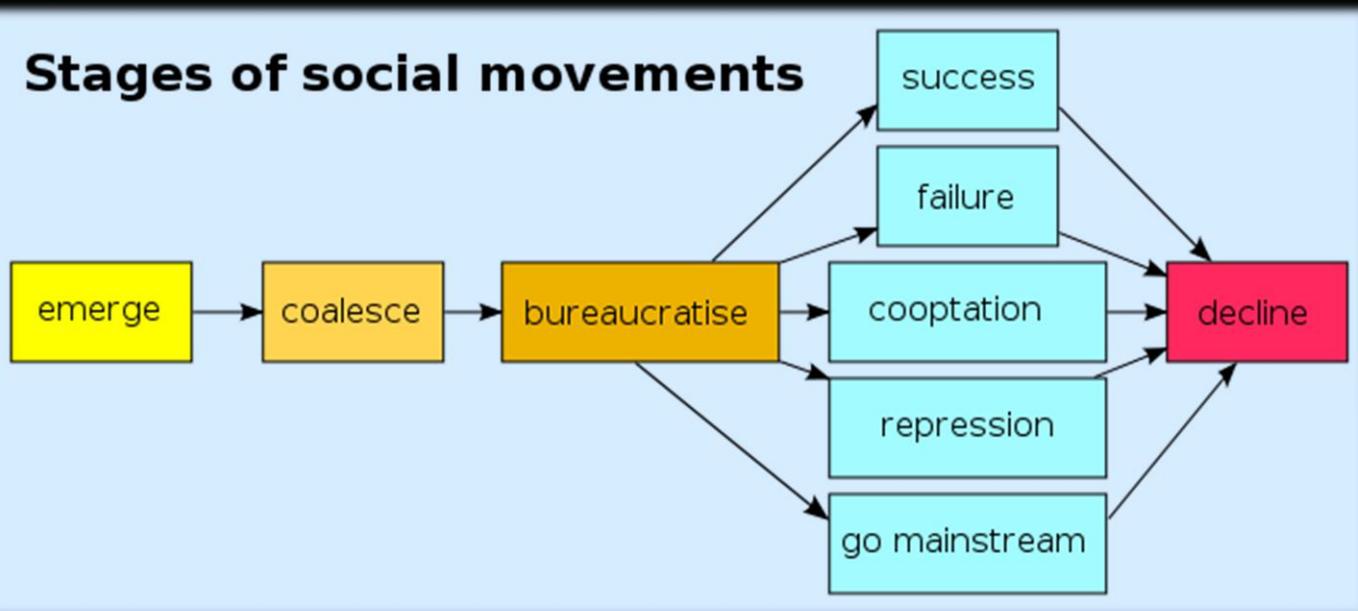
# Classifying Social Movements

- **alternative**: least threatening, limited change for limited number of members ... aimed at changing people's attitudes and behaviors in a specific way
- **redemptive**: selective focus, radical change
- **reformative**: limited social change targeting all members of society
- **revolutionary**: most severe, striving for basic transformation of society
- **resistance**: reactionary movements that seek to *block* change (Not shown on previous slide.)



# Stages of Social Movements

- Social movements have a life cycle and move through various stages.
  - **emergence**: perception that something is wrong
  - **coalescence**: defining itself and “going public”
  - **bureaucratization/institutionalization**: organizing rationally to get job done
  - **decline**: Is movement in need of regrouping or is it simply time for demise?



# Major Social Movements in the US



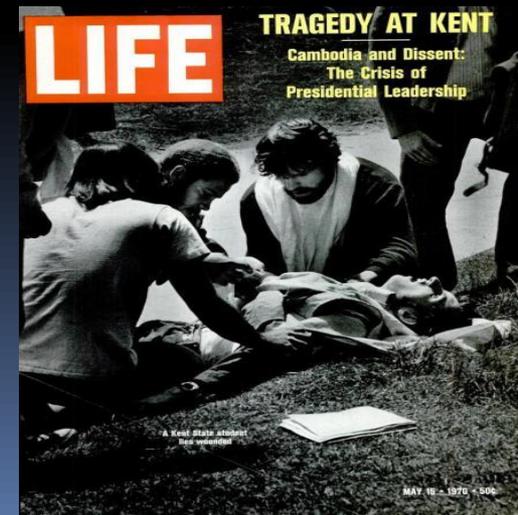
- **abolitionist movement**: goal to end slavery in the US ... active in northern states ... around for three decades before Civil War
- **populist movement** (1880s-1890s): disaffected farmers in south and west angry over business practices and developments in the economy that adversely affected them ... wanted to force public ownership / regulation of banks, grain storage companies and railroads ... were able to force federal regulation of corporations and pass Interstate Commerce Commission Act
- **women's suffrage** (late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century): won women the right to vote when 19<sup>th</sup> amendment was ratified in 1920
- **labor movements**: efforts by working people to protect jobs, ensure decent wages / benefits, guarantee safe work places ... **periods of militancy**: working people took the floors of factories or went to the streets to demand recognition of their unions in 1880s, 1890s and 1930s, forcing federal government to recognize rights of working people to form labor unions to represent them in negotiations with management



# Major Social Movements in the US



- **peace movement:** around since WWI (encouraged resistance to draft) ... refused service on religious or moral grounds (**conscientious objection**) ... carried over into WWII, Korean War, Kosovo, Vietnam War, Afghanistan ... **threat of nuclear war:** ban the bomb protests in 1950s, nuclear freeze demonstrations in 1980s
- **civil rights movement:** began in late 1950s / peaked in mid-1960s ... one of the most influential movements ... pressed successfully for formal end of segregation in south and discriminatory practices nationwide ... non-violent civil disobedience and mass demonstrations
- **anti-Vietnam War movement:** active in US in late 1960s and early 1970s ... goal to end Vietnam War ... mass demonstrations, voting registration and civil disobedience ... “Days of Rage” vandalism across Chicago’s Gold Coast, bombing of lab at University of Wisconsin, Kent State



# Major Social Movements in the US



- **women's rights movement:** important since late 1960s ... goal to win civil rights protection for women ... broadened participation of women in all aspects of society, economy and politics ... did not win main objective, getting Equal Rights Amendment passed (equality of rights shall not be denied or abridged based on a person's gender)
- **environmental movement:** active in US since early 1970s ... goal to encourage government regulation of damaging environmental practices and raise awareness of public ... unusually successful because of strong public support for environmental regulation ... violent / disruptive tactics sometimes used ... dependent on legal challenges to business practices and creation of organizations
- **gay and lesbian movement:** began in late 1960s with goals of gaining same civil rights protections as African Americans and respect from public ... used lobbying, voting, mass demonstrations and deliberately shocking actions (example: gay/lesbian group ACT-UP) ... partially successful with anti-discrimination laws / civil union laws, domestic partner benefits, Supreme Court has overturned anti-homosexual laws at state level ... counterattacked by Christian groups



# Major Social Movements in the US



- **religious fundamentalist movements:** occurred many times, has been very influential ... strongly religious people trying to infuse society with their values ... vital after American Revolutionary and Civil Wars ... important views on abortion, school prayer, education, censorship of media ... pro-life movement: goal to end legal availability of abortion in US
- **anti-corporate/globalization movement:** demonstrations against World Trade Organization in Seattle (1999) ... people who are worried about affects of globalization on environment, income inequality in US and third world countries, food safety, labor rights, sweatshops, unfair trade and national sovereignty
- **anti-Iraq War movement:** formed in months leading up to US invasion of Iraq in 2003 ... internet main source of communication, huge movement of mass demonstrations world-wide, demonstrations in 150 US cities ... did not convince President Bush to put off Iraq invasion
- **immigrants' rights movement:** in early stages



# Social Movements in a Majoritarian Democracy



- At first glance, social movements do not seem to fit very well with democratic theory.
  - They usually start out as minority phenomena.
  - They often use disruptive tactics.
- But social movements make a number of contributions to democracy.
  - increase visibility of important issues
  - encourage wider participation in public affairs
  - provide energy to overcome anti-majoritarian features of a constitutional system
  - bring social change through collective action
  - organize those with grievances



# Women Win the Right to Vote

- **Women's suffrage** was long and difficult. Main instrument for winning the struggle to amend the constitution was a powerful social movement.
- **Angelina Grimké Weld**: an American political activist, abolitionist, women's rights advocate and supporter of women's suffrage movement ... her essays and speeches were incisive arguments to end slavery and to advance women's rights ... fiercely defended women's right to make speeches and participate in political action
- **Seneca Falls Declaration** (1848): first conference to address women's rights and issues ... movement for women's rights launched on a national level



L-R: Seneca Falls Convention, 3<sup>rd</sup> is Elizabeth Cady Stanton speaking at the convention

# Women Win the Right to Vote



- post-Civil War formation of women's rights organizations
  - **National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA)** 1869: created in response to a split in the American Equal Rights Association over whether the woman's movement should support the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the US Constitution (granted African American *men* the right to vote) ... the "irreconcilables" who opposed the amendment because it did not include women
  - **American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA)** 1869: supported the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment ... believed it would fail if they pushed to include women
  - **National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA)** 1890: NWSA and AWSA merged to work for women's suffrage in the US
- **passage of 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment** (1919): granted American women the right to vote



# How Can Social Movements Help Make US Politics More Democratic?

- **encourage popular participation**: increase the level of popular involvement and interest in politics by dramatizing and bringing to public attention a range of issues that have been ignored or have been dealt with behind closed doors
  - **scope of conflict**: number of groups involved in a political conflict ... few groups means a narrow scope of conflict ... many groups means a wide scope of conflict
- **overcome political inequality**: allow individuals and groups without substantial resources to enter the game of politics ... made up of people who do not have access to the money, time, contacts or organizational resources that fuel normal politics
  - **mass mobilization**: process of involving large number of people in a social movement ... a powerful political tool for people on the outside looking in



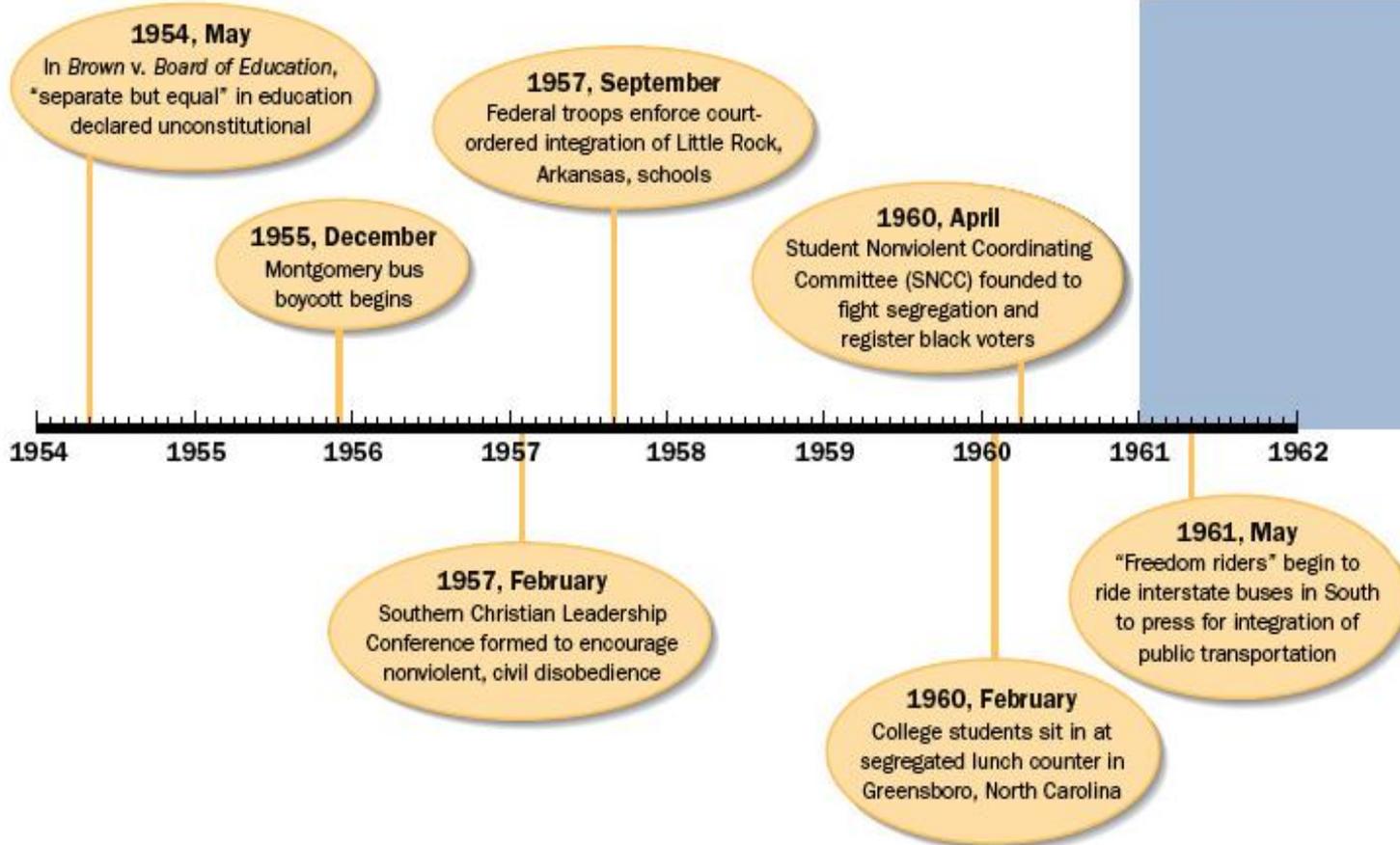


# How Can Social Movements Help Make US Politics More Democratic?

- **create new majorities**: example: Before the 1930s, only a minority convinced that labor unions were a good idea. Great Depression and a vigorous labor movement changed the opinion climate in the nation and created the basis for federal laws protecting the right of working people to form labor unions.
- **overcome gridlock / the status quo**: many movements have been less the result of normal politics than of social movements started by determined and often disruptive minorities



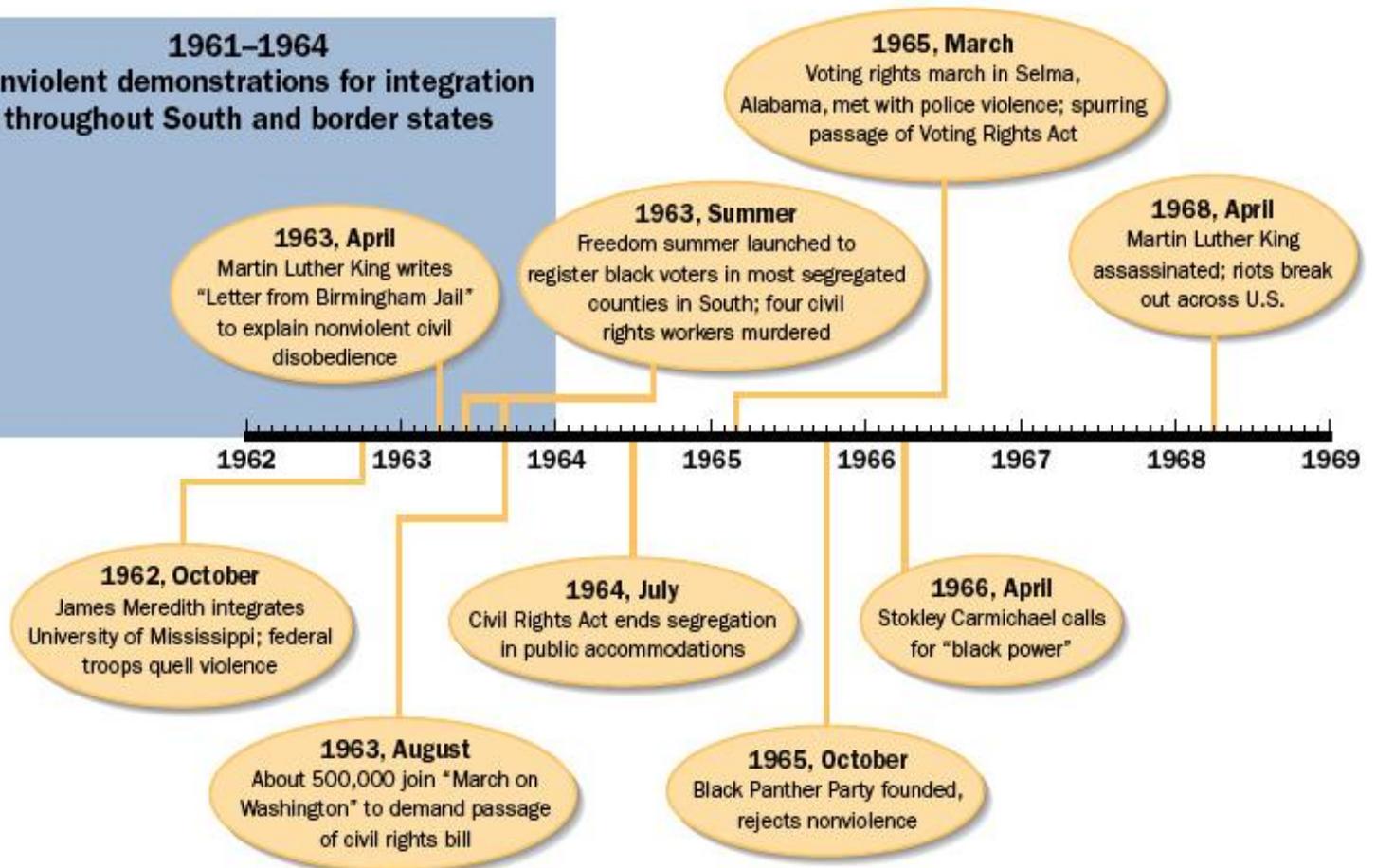
# Time Line: The Nonviolent Civil Rights Movement



# Time Line: The Nonviolent Civil Rights Movement



**1961–1964**  
Nonviolent demonstrations for integration throughout South and border states



# Factors That Encourage the Creation of Social Movements



Usually a combination of (mostly structural) factors

- **social distress**: a significant number of people come to define their own troubles and problems in general social terms (Deprivation Theory)
  - The **populist** movement occurred after western and southern farmers suffered great economic reversals during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
  - The **Christian conservative** movement rose due to decline of religious and family values.
  - The **women's rights** movement (1960s-1970s) was a reaction to discriminatory hiring and unequal pay.

Thousands of children have crossed the US-Mexican border, refugees from violence.



# Factors That Encourage the Creation of Social Movements



Usually a combination of (mostly structural) factors

- **resources for mobilization** (Resource-Mobilization Theory)
  - **Labor** movement generated talented leaders, active labor press and widespread media attention.
  - **Women's rights** movement had a sizable population of educated women, lively women's press and a network of meetings to talk about problems (consciousness-raising groups).
  - **Christian conservative** movement had skilled clergy, television and radio programs, and fundraising.
  - **Gay-Lesbian** movement's resources included an active press and financial support from various businesses.
  - **Civil rights** movement's resources included willing clergy, close-knit congregations, black-owned newspapers and radio stations, and existing groups such as the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Urban League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).



# Factors That Encourage the Creation of Social Movements



Usually a combination of (mostly structural) factors

- **supportive environment** (Culture Theory)
  - Support and tolerance must exist for the movement among the public and society's leaders.
- **sense of political efficacy among the participants**: a significant number of people believe that the government can be moved to action on their behalf (Political Process Theory)
  - sense that you can make a difference, self-confidence
- **catalyst**: a galvanizing event (Structural-Strain Theory)
  - **women's suffrage movement**: passage of 14<sup>th</sup> amendment
  - **gay and lesbian movement**: 1969 Stonewall Riots (series of spontaneous, violent demonstrations by members of the gay community against a police raid that took place in the early morning hours at the Stonewall Inn bar in Greenwich Village)
  - **civil rights movement**: Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her bus seat in Alabama in 1957



the Stonewall Inn

# White Support for Integration, 1942-1963



	Total	South	North
<b>"Negroes should have as good a chance as white people to get any kind of job."</b>			
1944	42%	—	—
1963	83	—	—
<b>"White students and Negro students should go to the same schools."</b>			
1942	30%	2%	40%
1956	49	15	61
1963	62	31	73
<b>There should not be "separate sections for Negroes on streetcars and buses."</b>			
1942	44%	4%	57%
1956	60	27	73
1963	79	52	89
<b>Would not make any difference to them if "a Negro with the same income and education as you moved into your block."</b>			
1942	35%	12%	42%
1956	51	38	58
1963	64	51	70



# Factors That Encourage the Creation of Social Movements

Usually a combination of (mostly structural) factors

- **multiplier effect**: If society is ready, the movement gains followers, public awareness grows, issue climbs up 'hierarchy of needs,' mass media interest grows, other groups adopt issue and reach critical mass.
- recent research
  - caused by **opportunity structures** such as economic, institutional and social contexts of a country conditioned by its access to social media

not created by a single variable but rather by a **set of variables that create an interaction effect**

**Discovering ways to mass organize** is as essential for the occurrence of social movements as the grievances that make people want to organize in the first place. The **introduction of social media** into the discussion is thought to have completely changed the way people are able to organize.



# Tactics of Social Movements



- typically **unconventional** and **dramatic**
- often **disruptive**
  - **women's suffrage movement**: mass demonstrations and hunger strikes
  - **labor movement**: sit-down strikes (form of labor action in which workers stop production but do not leave their job site)
  - **civil rights movement**: nonviolent civil disobedience, the movement's most effective tool

a Sunday "die-in" in the middle of a Philadelphia street ... "The entrenched interests who control the social and political infrastructure will only respond to a massive disruption to their smoothly functioning machine."





# Tactics of Social Movements

- Social movement tactics include:

- negotiation
- direct action
- events/media stunts
- demonstrations

Until justice rolls down like water...  
and righteousness like a mighty stream.

*-Martin Luther King*

- **propaganda**: information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote or publicise a particular political cause or point of view.
- strikes, boycotts, non-cooperation
- **civil disobedience**: intentionally breaking a law and accepting the consequences as a way to publicize the unjustness of the law
- **parallel structures**: build structures that parallel the official structures from which participants are excluded
- **passive resistance**: nonviolent opposition to authority, especially a refusal to cooperate with legal requirements.

# Tactics of Social Movements



- Social movement tactics include:
  - Martin Luther King's non-violence movement
    - way of life for courageous people
    - seeks to win friendship and understanding
    - seeks to defeat injustices, not people
    - holds that suffering for a cause can educate and transform
    - chooses love instead of hate
    - the universe is on the side of justice and right will prevail
    - sit-ins (at 'whites-only' lunch counters), freedom riders (riding segregated buses across the South), demonstrations and marches
    - police tactics (dogs, horses, cattle prods) added weight to the cause





# The Role of the Individual in Social Movements

## 1. Activist's Roles

[paceebene.org/sites/default/files/1\\_a\\_moyer\\_roles.pdf](http://paceebene.org/sites/default/files/1_a_moyer_roles.pdf)

<p><b>Ineffective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Naive citizen:</i> Does not realise the powerholders and institutions serve elite interests</li> <li>• <i>Super-patriot:</i> Blind obedience to powerholders and country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes positive, widely-held values e.g democracy, freedom, justice, non-violence</li> <li>• Grounded in centre of society</li> <li>• Protects against charges of 'extremism'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses official channels to make change</li> <li>• Uses variety of means: lobbying, legal action, elections</li> <li>• Monitors success to assure enforcement, expand success and guard against backlash</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ineffective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes minor reforms</li> <li>• Co-optation: identifies more with official powerholders than grass roots</li> <li>• Limited by hierarchical/patriarchal structure</li> <li>• Does not advocate paradigm shifts</li> </ul>
<div style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 10px; border-radius: 15px; display: inline-block;"> <b>CITIZEN      REFORMER</b>  <b>REBEL      CHANGE AGENT</b> </div>			
<p><b>Ineffective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-identifies as 'being on the fringe'</li> <li>• 'Any means necessary', including violence and property destruction</li> <li>• Acts from strong negative emotions such as anger, desperation and powerlessness</li> <li>• Anti-organisation, opposed to any rules or structure</li> <li>• Personal needs outweigh movement needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protests: Says "NO!" to violation of positive values</li> <li>• Uses NVDA and civil disobedience</li> <li>• Puts problems in public spotlight</li> <li>• Strategic</li> <li>• Exciting, courageous, risky</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses people power: educates, convinces &amp; involves majority of citizens</li> <li>• Mass-based grassroots organising</li> <li>• Employs strategy &amp; tactics for waging long-term movements</li> <li>• Promotes alternatives &amp; paradigm shifts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ineffective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utopian: promotes visions of perfectionism disconnected from current movement needs</li> <li>• Dogmatic: advocates single approach while ignoring others</li> <li>• Ignores personal needs of activists</li> <li>• Disengages from movement to live isolated, alternative lifestyle</li> </ul>

Adapted from Moyer, Bill. *The Practical Strategist*. San Francisco: Social Movement Empowerment Projecy, 1990.



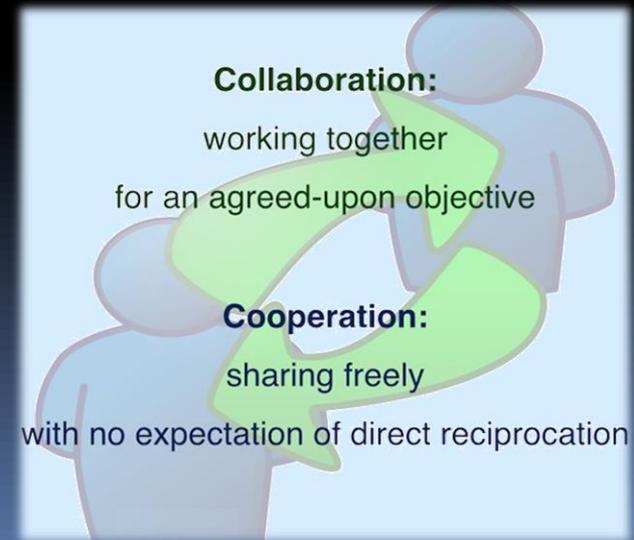
# Why Some Social Movements Succeed and Others Do Not

- Key factors:
  - proximity of the movement's goals to **American values**
  - movement's capacity to win **public attention and support**
  - movement's ability to affect the **political fortunes of elected leaders**



# What is Needed for Success

- grasp social change role
- professionalism and strategic ability
- tackle problems at root
- stop being co-opted
- updated and dynamic campaigning
- tap into other vital social concerns
- develop new paradigms/alternatives
- collaborate and cooperate



# Causes of the Decline of Social Movements



- **goal attainment:** Success can undermine a social movement as surely as failure ... achieving its central goal destroys a social movement's reason for existing.
- **difficult to maintain**
- **factional splits, fragmentation**
  - A social movement must meet several objectives:
    - maintain the **enthusiasm of activists**
    - attract more **activists and support** from the aggrieved group
    - gain **sympathy** from the general public
    - force a **positive response** from public officials.
  - These often contradictory objectives tend to **generate internal division over tactics and strategies.**



# Causes of the Decline of Social Movements



- exhaustion of movement activists
  - It is difficult to sustain high levels of active involvement for very long because social movements ask so much of their followers.
  - bureaucratization
  - A successful social movement sometimes generates a **countermovement** opposed to its main goals and aspirations.
  - **Reaction groups** are often more powerful than the protest movement itself.
- popular **support** for their goals **begins to erode**
- replacement of grassroots activity with **formal organizations** ... become interest groups and part of society's fabric
- **co-optation** by government or other groups
- **distraction**
- **repression**





# The Role of Social Movements

When a social movement adopts the compromises of legislators, it has forgotten its role, which is to push and challenge the politicians, not fall in meekly behind them. We who protest...are not politicians. We are citizens. Whatever politicians may do, let them first feel the full force of citizens who speak for what is right, not for what is winnable, in a shamefully timorous Congress.

Howard Zinn

Howard Zinn: professor,  
historian, activist, author  
of *A People's History of the  
United States*



The End

