

SOCI 360

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND COMMUNITY CHANGE

PROFESSOR
KURT REYMERS, PH.D.

SOCIOLGY.MORRISVILLE.EDU

You better think (think)
Think about what you're tryin' to do to me
Yeah think (think, think)
Let your mind go, let yourself be free...

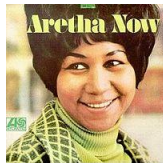
Artist: Aretha Franklin

Song: Think

Album: Aretha Now (1968)

Oh freedom (freedom)
Let's have some freedom (freedom)
Oh freedom
Yeah freedom (yeah)

THEME: "Thought=Choice=Freedom"



You need me, I need you
Without each other
there ain't nothing we can do

You got to have freedom (freedom)
Oh freedom (freedom)
You need some freedom
Oh freedom

You got to have
Hey! think about it
You! think about it



Arrested, jailed, beaten, chained, body-slammed, twisted, punched, & tortured to win us women the right to vote...and you're NOT going to use it?! Really?

1912–1920 Women’s Suffrage

Film: **Iron-Jawed Angels** (on YouTube)



K. Social Movement Leaders

1. Orienting Questions:

- *What social processes are involved in the emergence of leaders in social movements?*
- *What social factors— all apart from personality and leadership style – affect the likelihood that one or another person is elevated to that position?*
- *How do leaders gain legitimate authority in social movements once they attain that position?*
- *Is leadership democratic, autocratic, charismatic?*
- *What are the different types of functional roles that leaders fill?*
- *Are their different levels of leadership, each with specific goals and spheres of influence?*
- *How are differences in opinion over goals, tactics, and overall strategy – which invariably occur – managed?*

K. Social Movement Leaders

2. a. Leaders are critical to social movements, because they:

- inspire commitment,
- mobilize resources,
- create and recognize opportunities,
- devise strategies frame demands, and
- influence outcomes.

Any approach to leadership in social movements must examine the actions of leaders within structural contexts that both limit and facilitate opportunities, recognize the different levels of leadership, and understand the various functional roles filled by different types of movement leaders at different stages in movement development.

b. Four ideal types of leadership tiers often exist within movements:

- i. Formal Leaders
- ii. Leadership Team
- iii. Bridge Leaders
- iv. Organizing Leaders

K. Social Movement Leaders

2.b.i. Formal Leaders

The first tier consists of leaders who occupy the **top formal leadership positions**. The formal leaders typically the most **visible** members and the **spokesperson** of any given movement – they provide the **public face** of the movement.

In addition to articulating the main positions of the movement, devising movement strategies, and rallying the movement base, successful leaders are able to capitalize on connections to elites in other sectors such as political parties, unions, and mass media and turn them into allies.



Martin Luther King, Jr.



Elizabeth Cady Stanton
Susan B. Anthony



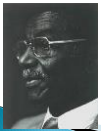
Gloria Steinem

K. Social Movement Leaders

2.b.ii. Leadership Team

The second tier consists of those who constitute the immediate **leadership team of formal leaders**. Such leaders often occupy **secondary formal positions** within movements.

Social movement leaders in these two tiers tend to come from the educated middle and upper classes, are disproportionately male, and usually share the race or ethnicity of their supporters.



Fred Shuttlesworth
SCLC



Gloria Steinem and
Dorothy Pittman-Hughes

K. Social Movement Leaders

2.b.iii. Bridge Leaders

The third leadership tier consists of **bridge leaders**. Bridge leaders are those **neighborhood and community organizers who mediate** between top leadership and the vast bulk of followers. Such leaders also perform the bulk of a movement's **emotional work** and may play dominant roles **during periods of crisis** and spontaneity.

During the civil rights movement, many women who were previously active in churches and in community organizations became bridge leaders who connected other members of the community to the movement.



Fannie Lou Hamer
1917 – 1980



Septima Clark
1898 – 1987

K. Social Movement Leaders

2.b.iv. Organizers

The fourth tier of leadership consists of those *organizers* who, in addition to **building connections between members of the local movement** and helping them **develop organizations**, also **routinely engage in leadership activity**.

Bridge leaders and organizers typically learn "what works" through on the job, hands-on experience. They affect movement success through their work within the movement, mobilizing the support necessary to carry out collective action tactics, which result in concrete gains for the movement.



K. Social Movement Leaders

3. Leaders: "Insiders" vs. "Outsiders"

a. Leaders who emerge from those groups most affected by the problem-situation – "*insiders*" – are likely to **share interests** of these groups and to **enjoy advantages in mobilizing** their social bases that outsiders lack.

They are often rooted in the pre-existing institutional structures and culture of the movement group and enjoy legitimacy given their shared group membership and shared fate, e.g. black ministers in the civil rights movement.
BUT...

K. Social Movement Leaders

3.b. All "Insiders" Are Not Alike

Different types of leaders come out of different types of preexisting organizational structures. Leaders from different types of backgrounds – even when they share "insider" status – shape organizational structures in accordance with their previous experiences, thus **influencing the mobilization, strategies, and outcomes of movements**.

*In the **American women's movement**, for example, "older branch" leaders came out of experiences in traditional voluntary organizations, unions, and political parties with formalized structures, whereas "younger branch" feminists came from groups that shunned leaders and formal structures out of a desire for participatory democracy.*

Schisms emerged as "older" feminists, stressing the impossibility of a truly leaderless, structureless group, argued that in the absence of a formal structure, an informal structure will develop with unaccountable leaders who are selected through friendship networks.

K. Social Movement Leaders

3.c. “Insiders” can also be “Outsiders”

Martin Luther King and the SCLC favored mobilizing the community around a particular campaign to capture national attention and, as a result, SCLC members stayed in communities for short periods of time.



Bob Moses and the *Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee* believed that “each and every one of us can strike a blow for freedom,” and made certain that SNCC members remain for the long haul, looking to develop local leadership and address the issues of concern to local people.



K. Social Movement Leaders

3.d. “Outsiders”

Social movement **leaders drawn from outside of the challenging group** are valuable because they may be anchored in **social networks otherwise unavailable** to the challenging group and they often bring fresh insights and analyses to the table from cultural sources outside the movement.

Especially relevant are collective action repertoires outsiders may have learned from other movements. Thus, the civil rights movement drew on leaders who had been active in the Communist, labor and peace movements.

K. Social Movement Leaders

3.e. Leaders: “Insiders” vs. “Outsiders”

Nevertheless, outside leaders **often create problems by “taking over”** leadership positions and creating animosity and jealousy, which **can lead to disintegration and factionalism**. Even more important, **if outsiders dominate the leadership process they can make poor strategic choices because of their lack of understanding of the challenging group**, lower levels of motivation, and the likelihood that they will not be accountable to movement constituencies.

Research indicates that movements consisting of both “insiders” with links to constituencies and “outsiders” with normative or professional commitments, of leaders with strong and weak ties to constituencies, and leaders with diverse repertoires of collective action tend to be more successful. It appears that movements that employ leaders from the outside but make sure that they are not dominant numerically or strategically are likely to have a greater chance of success.
