

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT MOVEMENT EMERGENCE AND SUCCESS?

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Prior to the 1970s, there was little academic interest in the study of social movements, and what little scholarship there was tended to depict movements as an expression of irrationality and pathology in social life (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Hoffer, 1951; Le Bon, 1960; Smelser, 1962). The turbulence of the 1960s changed all of that. A new generation of scholars, with sympathies for, if not roots in, the popular struggles of the



period, rejected the overly psychological, irrationalist view of movements and began to fashion very different theoretical accounts. Since then, the interdisciplinary field of social movement studies has grown exponentially, becoming one of the largest subfields in sociology, with significant presence in political science, education, and organizational studies, among other social science disciplines. Empirical work in the field reflects a wide range of research questions, focused at all levels of analysis: macro, meso, and micro.

Here, I will restrict myself to the two questions that seem most relevant to the immediate goal of the Group: stimulating grassroots action on the issue of vaccine hesitancy. The two questions are:

- What factors or dynamic processes appear to shape the emergence of social movements?
- What factors or features of movements shape their development over time and their prospects for success?

MOVEMENT EMERGENCE

Before I review scholarship on the first question, a caution is in order. Lest anyone think that I will offer a recipe for how to launch a movement, let me disabuse you of the expectation at the outset. Sustained social movements are exceedingly rare events, difficult to catalyze, and even harder to direct toward a successful outcome. Let me briefly describe a recent research project to add empirical ballast to that caution.



Between 2006 and 2011, Hilary Boudet and I (McAdam & Boudet, 2012) carried out a comparative case analysis of 20 communities that had been proposed as sites for major energy infrastructure projects that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency saw as posing significant environmental risks. As such, it mandated formal review under the terms of the National Environmental Protection Policy Act. For us, this highly

public declaration of environmental risk transformed these otherwise normal communities into ones “at risk” for NIMBY (not in my backyard)-style opposition movements. We hoped to answer several questions with our study, but none more important than the two centrally concerned with movement emergence: How many opposition movements developed across these 20 “at-risk” communities? Also, what causal factors explain the variation in the level of oppositional mobilization within them?

For me, the project grew out of a longstanding methodological critique of the heavy reliance by social movement scholars on single case studies of major social movements. For all the virtues of the case study method, it comes with a significant liability: the hoary problem of “selection on the dependent variable.” For a good many research questions—particularly those focused on internal movement dynamics—treating movements or movement organizations as the key unit of analysis is perfectly appropriate. But for those interested in understanding something about the factors and processes that shape the emergence and ultimate success of social movements, the longstanding practice of selecting major movements for study must be regarded as a serious problem. Selecting on the dependent variable in this way inevitably exaggerates the frequency of social movements and obscures the dynamics likely to shape their emergence.

The practical methodological solution to this problem is simple, though certainly not easy to execute. To understand movement emergence, we should be systematically comparing mobilization attempts, or better yet, communities (or populations) “at risk” for mobilization, rather than the rare, and almost certainly atypical, cases of mobilization that result in sustained, successful social movements. From a methodological standpoint, however, shifting the phenomenon of interest in this way poses challenges. How does one study non-events? Or more accurately, how do researchers identify or define communities “at risk” for mobilization? Fortunately, in our case, federal environmental requirements allowed for a simple and, we thought, ultimately convincing answer to the latter question.



So, how many of our communities generated movements in opposition to the proposed risky projects? Answer: exactly one. And even this movement was short-lived and very tame compared to the stereotypic image of protest movements we tend to carry around in our heads. Across all 20 communities, there were a total of 28 protests, and all but four took place in that single community. And there was nary an arrest, injury, or property damage across all protests. What makes these numbers even more remarkable is that they were not gathered in a random sample of all communities, but rather in locales subject to the objective risks associated with specific proposed projects—that is, in communities where, based on the received wisdom of some 40 years of social movement scholarship, we might have expected to find considerable contention.

And there is more. Far from generating opposition movements, in almost one-third of our study cases the communities in question came to view the proposed projects positively as sources of jobs and economic stimulus. All this conduces, in my view, to a critically important point: as much as law enforcement officials, intelligence analysts, and indeed, many scholars want to understand movements as a predictable response to a determinant stimulus, real-world movements rarely conform to this kind of simplistic cause-and-effect dynamic. And yet, much movement scholarship on the question of origins continues to advance a determinant view. Two broad categories have been stressed as the effective catalyst of social movements: threats and political opportunities.

Threats

Objective threats, such as those we saw in the energy infrastructure projects discussed above, are the first possible catalyst we examine. And indeed, a great many movements do seem to arise in response to threats of various kinds. NIMBY-style movements opposed to all manner of proposed projects—e.g., drug treatment facilities, homeless shelters, high-speed rail lines, incinerators, low-level radioactive waste sites, and high-rise buildings—are ubiquitous in American life. Scholars of ethnic conflict have long stressed demographic threats to the integrity of ethnic boundaries as the critical catalyst for episodes of racial/ethnic unrest and violence (Lieberson, 1980; Olzak, 1992, 2006).

A host of contemporary movements would also seem to be products of threats to the interests of specific groups. Black Lives Matter emerged in the days immediately following the shooting death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri as African Americans responded to the threat of police violence. The rising tide of climate-change activism clearly reflects a shared sense that global warming poses an existential threat to the survival of the planet. Anti-abortion



activists date the origin of the pro-life movement to the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision and the shared sense of threat to the sanctity of human life. Virtually every mass shooting incident sets in motion myriad grassroots efforts to press for more stringent gun controls or other measures to reduce the threat of gun violence.

I could name countless other movements—both contemporary and historical—that would seem to be clear responses to the stimulus of some kind of threat. For all the appeal of this determinant theory, however, we would do well to remember that 19 of the 20 communities proposed as sites for objectively risky energy projects did not respond with the kind of reactive NIMBY-style opposition movements the literature would seem to predict. The key word in the prior sentence is “objectively.” If the McAdam and Boudet (2012) study is any guide, *objective* opportunities are a poor predictor of emergent movements. But *subjective, socially constructed threats* to group interests are quite another matter.

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| Expanding Political Opportunities

A second impetus for social movements is political opportunity. “Rights movements,” the popular struggles by traditionally disadvantaged groups, are among the most consequential and widely studied of social movements. No U.S. movement has generated more scholarship than the African American civil rights movement (Andrews, 2004; Eskew, 1997; Garrow, 1978; Hall, 2005; McAdam, 1999 [1982]; Morris, 1984; Payne, 1996). That said, there is also substantial literature on the 19th-century women’s rights movement in the United States, the women’s suffrage movement in both its British and American manifestations, third-wave feminism in the United States, the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, and the Gandhian movement for Indian independence, to name just a few prominent examples. For all their importance in other movements, threats appear to play little or no role in rights movements. For traditionally disadvantaged groups, threats—to physical safety, to economic well-being, to human dignity, and more—are a daily reality, and rarely catalysts for action.

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Opportunities to act and address their marginalized status are a different matter. Under ordinary circumstances, stigmatized, disadvantaged groups face enormous obstacles in their efforts to advance group interests. Marginalized groups exercise little or no influence within institutional politics precisely because their bargaining position, relative to that of political and economic elites, is so weak. But the particular set of power relationships that defines the political system at any point in time does not constitute an immutable structure of political life. As Michael Lipsky (1970), one of the earliest proponents of “political opportunity” theory, argued:

...attention is directed away from system characterizations presumably true for all times and places... We are accustomed to describing communist political systems as “experiencing a thaw” or “going through a process of retrenchment.” Should it not at least be an open question whether the American political system experiences such stages and fluctuations? Similarly, is it not sensible to assume that the system will be more or less open to specific groups at different times and at different places?

Lipsky, like all other political opportunity theorists, clearly believed that the answer to both questions is an emphatic “yes.” The opportunities for marginalized groups to engage in successful collective action *do* vary over time. And it is these variations that came to be viewed as the key to understanding the ebb and flow of movement activity. Under normal conditions, disadvantaged groups confronting a unified and hostile political and economic establishment lack the leverage to sustain a successful movement. Instead, rights movements develop when shifting political, social, or economic conditions (i.e., political opportunities) make movement opponents newly vulnerable or receptive to protest.

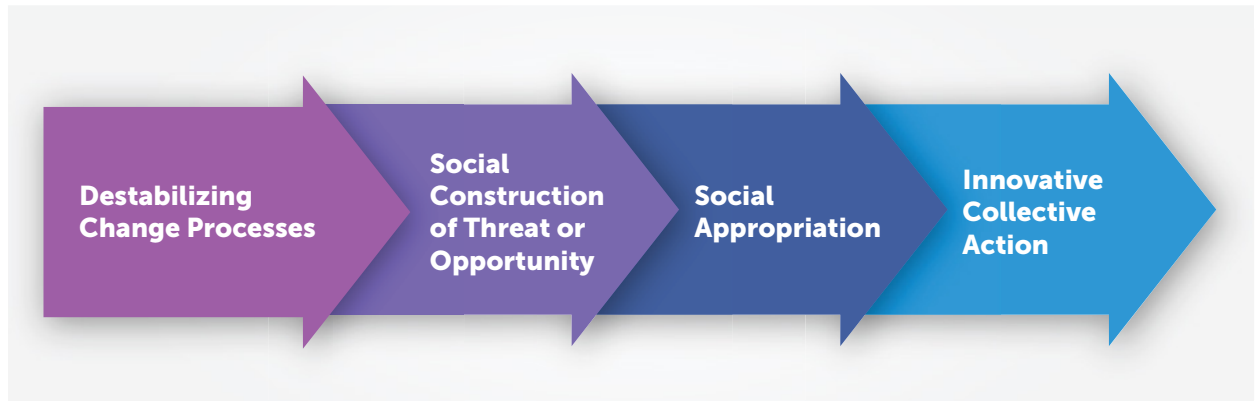
Indeed, history shows that many rights movements coincide with such periods of expanding political opportunities. The emergence and development of movements as diverse as the modern U.S. women’s movement (Costain, 1992), liberation theology (Smith, 1991), peasant rebellions in Central America (Brockett, 1991), the American civil rights movement (Jenkins, Jacobs, & Agnone, 2003; McAdam, 1999 [1982]), the farm workers’ movement (Jenkins & Perrow, 1977); the nuclear freeze movement (Meyer, 1990), and the Italian new left (Tarrow, 1989) have been attributed to the expansion and contraction of political opportunity.

The problem, however, is the same as the one raised above regarding the concept of threat. For every instance of objective opportunity that appears to stimulate collective action, there are countless others that don’t. And here is where the problem of selecting on the dependent variable rears its head again. If we only study sustained, visible movements, we will inevitably find many that seem to confirm the catalytic effect of either threat or opportunity, but miss all those where objective threats or opportunities fail to set movements in motion.

Does that mean that the concepts of threat and opportunity have no analytic value in the study of movement emergence? No. It simply means that the stress on objective, macro-level threats or opportunities must give way to an emphasis on perceived—or subjective—threats or opportunities and to the group-level processes of social construction and collective attribution that give rise to these crucially important shared perceptions. In place of the simple stimulus/response models that have tended to guide the study of movement origins, we need to view emergent collective action as a rare event that depends on several highly contingent group-level processes. A dynamic model of movement emergence (Figure 1) highlights two especially critical processes in this regard.

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Figure 1. Dynamic model of movement emergence



| Social Construction of Threat or Opportunity

Human beings are voracious meaning-makers. The monitoring and interpretation of events and environmental conditions provide the foundation for all social life, routine no less than contentious. Consistent with this view, initial movement mobilization depends on an emerging collective account of some new threat to, or opportunity for, realizing group interests. Normally, this account is a response to objective change processes. In rare cases, these changes are so dramatic as to virtually compel their own interpretation. The 9/11 terrorist attacks are a good case in point.

Far more often, however, the emerging accounts of a threat or opportunity are highly contingent social constructions that are in no simple sense determined by the change processes themselves. Indeed, in rare instances such interpretations may even arise in the absence of any objective changes in the life circumstances of the group in question (Kurzman, 1996).

In their 1982 book, *Encounters with Unjust Authority*, Gamson, Fireman, and Rytina (1982) report the results of an ingenious study designed to better understand these crucial mediating processes. The researchers began by placing an ad in a local paper inviting individuals to participate in “research involving group discussion of community standards” and to be paid for their time. When each of the 33 groups of participants assembled, they were told that their discussions would establish the “community standards” for determining the guilt or innocence of a gas station owner who was being stripped of his station by a national oil company for failing to live up to the “moral turpitude” clause of his contract. They were further told that the firm running the videotaped discussion session was working for the oil company, but was simply gathering information to aid the trial process.

As the session unfolded, the person in charge became increasingly coercive in his efforts to elicit statements supporting the oil company's position in the case. By the session's end, it was all too apparent to the participants that the supposed research project was little more than a front to advance the interests of the oil company. Given that the group was clearly being used to subvert the criminal justice system, one might assume that the participants would resist this transparent injustice. In fact, slightly fewer than half did so, reminding us again that objective grievances are not sufficient to produce collective action. Key to transforming these objective grievances into a shared resolve to act was the social construction of an "injustice frame" (Gamson et al., 1982).

| Social Appropriation

As Gamson et al. (1982) go on to show, the emergence of a shared frame is not sufficient for collective action. For collective attributions to trigger action, the interpreters must share enough of a sense of "we-ness" to make conjoint action viable. This is almost certainly why movements develop within established groups or networks—they are settings in which a well-defined collective identity and elaborate structure of solidarity incentives already exist. The point is, as a prerequisite for action, would-be insurgents must either create an embryonic collective identity or appropriate an existing one. Without minimizing the difficulties inherent in the process, social appropriation is far easier than creating a sense of "we-ness" from scratch. No doubt, much of the difficulty Gamson's would-be insurgents faced owed to the absence of any pre-existing collective identity.

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But incipient movements require much more than a shared sense of identity to be successful. They also require some sort of action vehicle. Again, these can be created from whole cloth, but it is much more efficient to have access to an existing structure. The other virtue of appropriation is that it typically affords the burgeoning movement a ready-made mobilizing structure. That is, social appropriation typically involves transforming an established social group into an effective site of emergent contentious action.

A well-known example of this process may help to make it more comprehensible. Movement scholars have thoroughly documented the central role played by the black church in helping to launch the civil rights movement (McAdam, 1999 [1982]; Morris, 1984;

Oberschall, 1973). But while the movement's debt to the black church is widely acknowledged, the standard narrative obscures cultural and social psychological processes of great importance. Until the rise of the movement, it was common for observers—black and white—to depict the black church as a generally conservative institution with a decided emphasis, not on the “social gospel in action,” but rather on realizing rewards in the afterlife (Johnson,



1941; Mays & Nicholson, 1969; Myrdal 1944). Moreover, the traditional conservatism of the institution did not entirely disappear during the movement. Charles Payne's (1996) exceptional book on the movement in Mississippi makes it clear that the conservative nature of local black clergy remained a significant obstacle to local organizing even during the movement's heyday.

Given this complicated portrait of the black church, the highly contingent nature of initial mobilization attempts should be clear. To turn even some black congregations into vehicles of collective protest, movement leaders had to engage in a lot of creative cultural work, through which the aims of the church and its animating collective identity were redefined to accord with the goals of the emerging struggle. This is, first and foremost, a social psychological process that has far more to do with social construction, collective attribution, and re-socialization than with any kind of objective inventory of organizational resources. Organization and resources matter little if their use is not governed by shared meanings and identities legitimating collective action.

This brings us to the key explanatory question: What factors make successful social appropriation more likely? The question takes on added force in the face of the powerful inertial force of most social settings. That is, with few exceptions, established groups, institutions, and networks are geared toward reproducing (or at least accommodating), rather than challenging, the status quo. Religious institutions are houses of worship, colleges are centers for learning, and so forth. To transform any routine social setting into a site of incipient rebellion poses a distinct challenge to anyone making the attempt. What factors or processes offer some hope of successfully engaging the challenge? Alas, the structural bias in social movement studies means we have almost no empirical work to draw on to answer that question. For now, informed speculation must fill the void.

I close this section by briefly discussing two factors that appear to facilitate social appropriation. The first is what Snow and Benford (1988) refer to as “frame resonance.” By that, they mean system-critical interpretative schema that resonate with deeply held cultural beliefs and values. It makes sense to hypothesize that, all things being equal, attempts at appropriation are more likely to succeed if they are framed in especially resonant terms. But if the message is important, I am inclined to believe the messenger is even more important. That is, the single most important factor shaping the prospects for successful appropriation may well be the social status of the would-be appropriator.

This is little more than an extension of years of diffusion research (Rogers, 1995). The success and speed with which innovations diffuse depends centrally on the social status of the innovators and initial adopters. If we regard appropriation attempts as *social* innovations, it makes sense to assume the same pattern would hold. So, for example, I would expect the established leaders of an organization to have an easier time redefining its purposes than a rank-and-file member of the group. For example, much of the stunning and immediate success of the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott was due to the vocal support—sponsorship, really—it received from the town’s established ministerial elite. Redefining the Christian duties of their congregations to include staying off busses, the ministers effectively appropriated their churches in service to the burgeoning movement.



These two processes—social construction of threat and opportunity and social appropriation—are, in my view, the keys to movement emergence. The inertial force of social life makes both processes highly unlikely and hard to achieve. Moreover, three additional processes must occur if a movement is to fully develop. Having succeeded in motivating an existing group to address some new threat or opportunity, there is still the critical issue of strategy and tactics. How is the threat or opportunity to be

approached? By definition, social movements rely, at least in part, on unconventional or non-institutionalized forms of collective action. Had Montgomery’s ministers simply urged their congregants to write letters protesting segregated seating in city busses, there may never have been a civil rights movement, or at least it would not have arisen in Montgomery.



Finally, imagine what would have had happened if the one-day symbolic boycott that launched the movement had failed—if only half the riders observed the boycott, rather than the estimated 90–95% who did so. Instead of the sense of elation shared by the black community at the end of the day, black residents would likely have felt deflated and pessimistic about the prospects for meaningful change in Montgomery. The point is that absent a clear sense that its initial actions were successful, most would-be movements die quickly. But should all these processes come together, it is very likely that a sustained movement would result. Whether it is successful in achieving its goal, however, is quite another matter.

MOVEMENT SUCCESS

The scholarship on social movements tends to be bifurcated when it comes to movement success or outcomes. In accounting for the success or failure of a given movement, many analysts focus on significant changes in the external social and political environment that either strengthen or weaken the hand of insurgents. The implication is that movements are not fully in control of their fate; rather, their influence is shaped by perturbations in the broader environment within which they operate.

The “movement-centric” emphasis of recent scholarship (McAdam & Boudet, 2012) is in sharp contrast to this external focus. With its stress on movement-framing processes, strategies, tactics, and resource mobilization, the social movement literature often ignores environmental influences in favor of an emphasis on the decisions made by insurgents. This implicitly locates the source of change, agency, and outcomes within the movement itself. So, too, does much of the narrower literature on non-violence (Ackerman & Duvall, 2000; Bleiker, 2000; Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011; Schock, 2005). The suggestion in much of this literature is that adherence to non-violent principles confers great strategic advantage on movements that adopt such tactics. In the extreme, work in this tradition implies that, through the tactical and value choices they make, activists control their own fate. In both bodies of work, environmental influences are elided in favor of an emphasis on internal movement dynamics and decisions.



In truth, these distinct emphases capture an important truth about the ongoing development and ultimate impact of movements over time. Movements *are* powerfully shaped by the environments—social, political, and economic—in which they are embedded. As we have seen, movements typically benefit from prior, destabilizing change processes that render opponents more vulnerable or receptive to movement influence. But again, this is not to posit simple environmental determinism. Successful movements also depend critically on the capacity of movement actors to recognize and respond strategically to the evolving opportunities and constraints afforded them by environmental changes. Indeed, in practice, it is often hard to distinguish external changes from the internal movement efforts to exploit these changes. It is this ongoing interaction between insurgents and the broader environment that ultimately shapes relative success.

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Having sketched this general analytic framework for considering the development and impact of social movements, it is important to introduce the distinction between what Gamson (1975) first termed “members” and “challengers.” *Members* are groups possessing sufficient political and economic resources and social connections to ensure that their interests are generally taken into account in formulating public policy. *Challengers*, on the other hand, are marginalized groups whose interests are routinely “organized out” of institutionalized political deliberations because they lack insider status and bargaining leverage. Social movements organized by members and challengers tend to look very different, reflecting stark differences in resources and connections. Chief among these differences are the breadth of their goals, their tactics and strategies, and the support they can expect from other insiders.

Movements spearheaded by members are very likely to involve only limited reforms pursued primarily, if not exclusively, through institutionalized channels and conventional means. Moreover, because of the connections and conventional social, political, and economic capital enjoyed by these insiders, as well as their narrow reform aims, these movements can generally count on considerable support from other members. Challenger movements, on the other hand, typically involve broader and potentially more threatening goals pursued through a mix of strategies, but with a much heavier reliance on disruptive, or otherwise unconventional, tactics. While these hallmark characteristics shape the popular perception of social movements overall, the factors and processes that shape the prospects for success by members or challengers are actually quite different.

| Challenger Movements

The characteristics shaping the fate of popular struggles organized on behalf of traditionally disadvantaged groups differ from insider movements in two principal ways. First, challenger movements depend for their emergence and ultimate success on expanding political opportunities far more than insider movements. That's because the power and resource disparities between challengers and their insider opponents is typically so great as to limit any chance of success. Broad changes that reduce these disparities are thus critical if the movement is to achieve any measure of success.

The other difference between outsider and insider movements is the much greater reliance of the former on non-institutional, and often disruptive, forms of collective action. Lacking insider connections and the kinds of conventional political and economic resources enjoyed by members, the success of challengers often depends on their ability to disrupt or threaten to disrupt "business as usual" in order to compel their opponents to grant concessions as a condition of restoring order. On those rare occasions when challenger movements succeed, they typically do so because of this combination of top-down political opportunities and sustained bottom-up disruptive pressure.

| Member Movements



Insider movements, which represent the great majority of social movements, are typically characterized by very different dynamics. A movement to promote vaccination or counter the burgeoning anti-vaccination movement would almost certainly fall into this category. What might such a movement—or movements—look like? I bring the paper to a close by describing three very different movement strategies and affiliated targets, using social movement theory to assess the relative merits and potential liabilities of each approach.

Pro-vaccination efforts to counter the anti-vaccination movement. While anti-vaccination sentiment and behavior have existed in some form for two centuries (Wolfe & Sharp, 2002), there has clearly been a significant rise in recent decades. And while rates of vaccination have remained relatively stable, the worry is that we may be at an inflection point, with escalating

anti-vaccination activism poised to have an increasingly corrosive effect on vaccination rates and norms. Research on the cognitive and affective content of the anti-vaccination narrative serves to reinforce this concern. As Brewer, Chapman, Rothman, Leask, and Kempe (2017) put it: "...antivaccination activists tell a good story... the stories elicit emotions such as anger, fear, and regret, as well as medical mistrust... As a result, antivaccine messages are interesting, memorable, and in demand." In contrast, "messages from official sources tend to be factual, cryptic and forgettable."



Given the apparent effectiveness of the anti-vaccination effort, one tempting strategy would be to mobilize a pro-vaccination countermovement committed to systematically contesting the anti-vaccination narrative whenever and wherever it makes sense to do so. In his presentation to the Group, Joe Smyser made a compelling case for just this kind of countermovement. In my view, however, there are a host of potential liabilities to this approach. First, if the fundamental goal of any pro-vaccination effort is to increase rates of inoculation, it is not at all clear that even an effective effort to

counter the narrative of diehard anti-vaccination activists and bloggers will move the needle very much. The hardcore group is not going to change its views, and it isn't clear how many "hesitants" or "fence-sitters" are actually influenced by their narrative.

More worrisome, perhaps, is the very real possibility that the counternarrative will prove ineffective, or worse, backfire and grant more visibility and legitimacy to the anti-vaccination activists. There are at least three reasons for worrying about this outcome. First, if we trust the comparison drawn by Brewer et al. (2017) between the effectiveness of anti-vaccination spokespersons and the ineffective, "forgettable" quality of the typical pro-vaccination narrative, we might want to think twice before orchestrating a highly public confrontation between these two sets of actors. Second, quite apart from the resonance of the competing narratives, we should also worry about the institutional identities associated with the typical pro-vaccination spokespersons. In an era of rising anti-government, anti-science, anti-elite sentiment, one can imagine pronouncements by leading public health or other government officials reinforcing, rather than allaying, the fears and suspicions of those inclined toward anti-vaccination views.

Third, there is one final potential danger associated with a concerted attack on the hardcore wing of the anti-vaccination movement, which the concept of “radical flank effect” from the social movement literature helps us understand (Haines, 2013). Somewhat counterintuitively, movement scholars have amassed considerable evidence that a movement benefits from having a highly visible extremist wing. While one might think that an extremist wing would serve to discredit the movement as a whole, studies of the phenomenon have found something different.

Radical flank effects occur when the actions of radical groups work to the benefit of the moderate core of the movement. For instance, disruptive tactics or inflammatory rhetoric employed by radicals may attract greater public attention to issues that moderate actors have sought to address with limited success. The presence of a radical flank may also allow moderates to portray themselves as the reasonable and responsible voices within the larger movement (Connor & Epstein, 2007; Elsbach & Sutton, 1992; Hoffman & Bertels, 2009). And by enhancing the reputation of the moderates in this manner, the radical flank may also increase their attractiveness to potential funders and political allies. The fear is that a highly public, sustained effort to counter the narrative of extreme anti-vaccination groups or individuals will actually enhance their visibility and usher in the effects described here.



A pro-vaccination movement aimed at persuading “fence-sitters.” Given all the potential risks associated with a sustained countermovement, a safer and potentially more successful strategy might be to orchestrate a broad-based “insider” campaign to increase vaccination rates by persuading those on the fence to get inoculated. To be effective, the movement would need to enlist a broad coalition of institutional allies from the worlds of public health, medicine, philanthropy, and health-related non-profits.

One component of the movement might involve conventional public health education campaigns targeting specific communities with especially low vaccination rates (e.g., Orthodox Jews and African Americans).

In my view, however, the centerpiece of the effort would be a renewed commitment to using clinical settings as sites for proactive vaccine counseling and education where nurses and

doctors primarily target fence-sitters. For this to work, however, the current trend of health care providers denying service to those who hesitate or choose not to be vaccinated would have to be reversed. Instead of sharpening the boundary between those who do and do not get vaccinated by pushing fence-sitters toward providers willing to cater to them, the goal would be to continue providing care to those who are hesitating. The hope is that with repeated efforts at persuasion, their fears and misconceptions can be overcome.

Finally, to maximize the benefits of the campaign, I would suggest it be designed not only as a proactive effort to increase vaccination rates, but also as a systematic research project to determine which clinical approaches are most effective in transforming fence-sitters into those who get vaccinated. By doing so, pro-vaccination researchers and advocates should be able, over time, to devise increasingly effective clinical practices to overcome vaccine hesitancy.

Coordinated top-down, bottom-up political movement in receptive jurisdictions.

Based on the successful legislative lobbying efforts in California and elsewhere, another promising form of mobilization would seem to be coordinated top-down and bottom-up efforts to press legislators to pass vaccine mandates or other pro-vaccination measures. While member movements often succeed in the absence of significant grassroots activism, insider reform combined with pressure from grassroots groups would certainly increase the chances of movement success. This seems to be the formula that worked well in California and several other states. One caution: I would restrict these legislative movements to the most receptive states or other jurisdictions. Achieving legislative gains in even a limited set of states would create policy models for others and pressure them to at least engage the issue. On the other hand, creating a visible pro-vaccination grassroots movement in hostile states would almost certainly trigger reactive mobilization by anti-vaccination groups, without any chance of achieving legislative success. Better to leave sleeping dogs lie in non-receptive states, while concentrating pro-vaccination efforts in states reliably committed to immunization.



CONCLUSION

In bringing this paper to a close, I return to the two questions I posed at the outset. First, "What factors or dynamic processes appear to shape the emergence of social movements?" And second, "What factors or features of movements shape their development over time and their prospects for success?" Having thoroughly engaged the complexities of these two

questions, I use the conclusion to offer straightforward answers to both.

While most theories and popular accounts of social movements persist in depicting their beginnings as a predictable response to some objective threat or opportunity, such threats or opportunities generally fail to trigger collective action. Rather, the origin of a movement reflects the subjective significance attached to that threat or opportunity by a specific group, which then begins to engage in sustained collective action in response to their shared perception. The vaccine hesitancy movement did not emerge because of an increase in the objective risk posed by vaccines, but because specific groups constructed an account of increased risk and began acting collectively to counter that perceived threat.

And what of the equally important question of movement success? While the characteristic features and typical dynamics of insider and outsider movements tend to be quite different, the long-term success of either generally reflects the interaction of two factors. On the one hand, the prospects for movement success are powerfully shaped by the environments in which they are embedded. As we have seen, successful movements typically benefit from prior, destabilizing change processes that render their opponents more receptive to movement influence. And they also depend critically on the capacity of movement actors to recognize and respond strategically to the evolving opportunities and constraints afforded them by environmental changes. This ongoing interaction between movement groups and the broader strategic environment ultimately shapes the relative impact of the movement.



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