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DIGITAL GOVERNMENT I  
WEEK 5: POWER, ADVOCACY,  
AND MOBILIZATION: SOCIAL  
MOVEMENTS

Feb 10, 2009

# tonight's plan

- the people have spoken: shorter final assignment (6-8 pages), preposting of weekly in-class assignments, and a question.
- comm studies seminar, Thursday, 4-5, Rm 283 Comm Studies (big ugly building on South U)
- book reviews
- large group review of additional readings
- my lecture: social movement theory
- assignment five
- project 1-pagers, group discussions / post-class consultations

# Some general framing points:

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- Information (technology) and the ‘deep structures’ or ‘long duree’ of democratic politics (cf. work around deliberative forums, political campaigns, etc.)

# What are social movements?

- Tilly & Tarrow: “A sustained campaign of claim making using repeated performances that advertise the claim, based on organizations, networks, traditions, and solidarities that sustain these activities.” (*Contentious Politics*, 111)

# Some variations and dimensions:

- **‘old’ social movements (‘OSMs’)**: e.g. anti-slavery, labor/trade unionism, class and women’s suffrage, etc.  
**‘new’ social movements (‘NSMs’)**: e.g. post-war feminism, civil rights, environmental movement, peace/anti-war movements, etc.)
- **orientation**: change (progressive) vs. preservation (conservative)
- **scope**: reform (progressive) vs. radical (conservative)
- **methods**: e.g. peaceful vs. violent, ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ strategies
- **targets**: STATES, corporations, institutions vs. individuals / culture
- **scale**: local, global, and some combination

# Where do movements come from?

- a) structural changes or contradictions (e.g. urbanization, industrialization, colonization, etc.);
- b) individuals and movement entrepreneurs;
- c) organizations and networks;
- d) catalytic events; or
- e) all of the above?

(a thought experiment: what would the U.S. civil rights movement look like without: Martin Luther King? Southern Christian Leadership Conference / network of baptist churches in the American South? Rosa Parks?)

(a terminological point: 'social movements' vs. 'social movement organizations'; or 'SM base' vs. 'campaign')

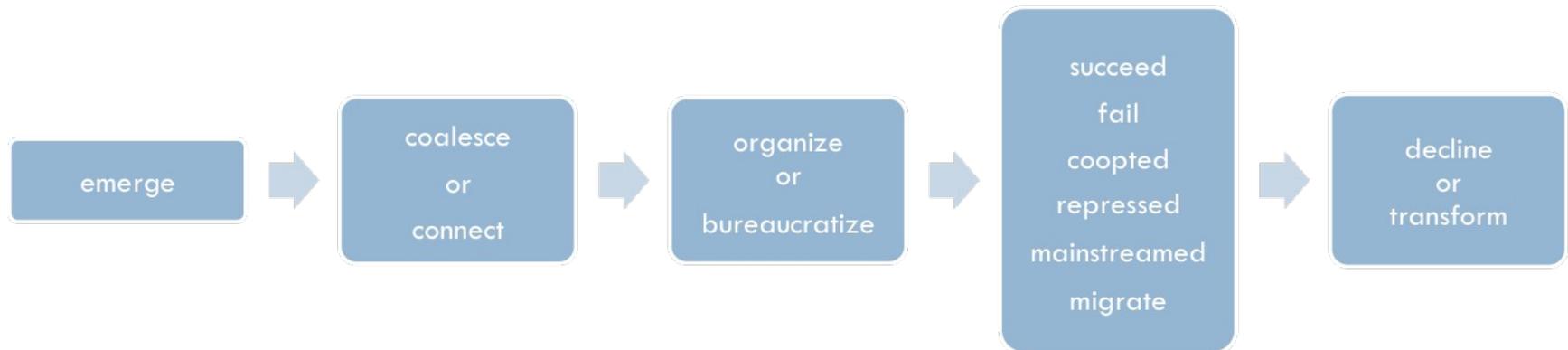
# Some flavors of social movement theory...

- **Collective action theories (1950s):** movements are collective action problems, growing from alignment of interests, coordination of action, etc.
- **Relative deprivation theories (1960s):** movements grow in response to the 'felt' or 'objective' deprivation of their members
- **Resource mobilization theories (1970s):** movements grow through mobilization of people, money, knowledge, legitimacy, etc.
- **Identity, frame, or cultural theories (1980s/90s):** (new social) movements grow by: a) establishing new frames around accepted social problems; and b) cultivating new personal and collective identities for their members.
- **Political opportunity theories (1980s/90s):** movements grow in response to changes in the political opportunity structure that shift the costs and results of collective action (e.g. Tilly's claim that democracies have social movements, authoritarian regimes have revolutions)

# Temporal dynamics (the timeliness of social movements)

## Social movement stages or lifecycle (a rough map!)

(Adapted from Blumer, Mauss, and Tilly, with thanks to Wikipedia)



**Point One:** Different social movement elements (structure, individuals, organizations, events, etc. may have different roles to play at different moments in the 'lifecycle'.

**Point Two:** Different social movement theories may be better at accounting for some moments and dynamics within the SM lifecycle than others.



## *A question...*

Are there ‘born digital’ social movements? (e.g. net neutrality? open source? others?)

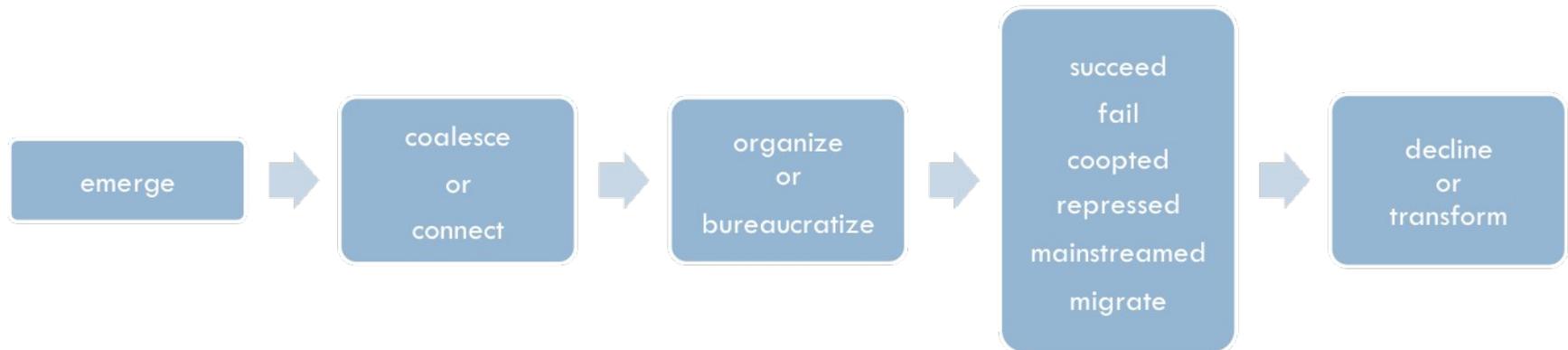
Do the elements, dynamics, and theories of such phenomena map to those of ‘traditional’ (‘old’ and ‘new’) social movements?

What can and can’t be learned from SM theory for the study and analysis of such phenomena?

# Temporal dynamics (the timeliness of social movements)

## Social movement stages or lifecycle (a rough map!)

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**Point One:** Different social movement elements (structure, individuals, organizations, events, etc. may have different roles to play at different moments in the ‘lifecycle’.

**Point Two:** Different social movement theories may be better at accounting for some moments and dynamics within the SM lifecycle than others.

**\*\*\* Point Three:** The need / role / opportunity for information processes and technologies may differ radically at different moments in the SM lifecycle. \*\*\*

# Assignment Five: A Cornucopia of Choice!

Are there ‘born digital’ social movements? (e.g. net neutrality? open source? others?)? Do the elements, dynamics, and theories of such phenomena map to those of ‘traditional’ (‘old’ and ‘new’) social movements? What can and can’t be learned from SM theory for the study and analysis of such phenomena?

*or*

Per the lifecycle diagram on preceding slides, indicate the distinctive functions, contributions, and possible applications of information processes and technologies at various moments (from emergence to decline or transformation) in the SM lifecycle. If it’s helpful, you may structure your discussion around an existing, nascent, or potential / imaginary social movement.