
UTILITARIAN LOGIC IN THE
RESOURCE MOBILIZATION PERSPECTIVE

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Utilitarian Logic in the Resource Mobilization Perspective¹

Introduction

Beware of economists bearing gifts. Their models are catching the fancy of a number of sociologists interested in social movements (e.g. Oberschall, 1973; McCarthy and Zald, 1973, 1977; Tilly, 1978). We welcome the focus on resources, organization, and strategic interaction; and it's refreshing to get away from the concern with irrationality that blinded sociologists to problems of resource mobilization. But the economists' models carry their own set of blinders.

In the study of collective action, utilitarian assumptions and the conceptual imagery of economics are most useful when relevant interests are given, concrete and selfish. Perhaps resource mobilization by business firms proceeds under roughly these conditions, but the mobilization of social movements often hinges on changing interests, changing opportunities and threats to interests, and changing inclinations to act on group interests rather than individual ones. Such matters tend to be obscured by utilitarian models, if not ignored altogether.

We try to unravel several problems with utilitarian approaches to social movements, by considering Mancur Olson's influential Logic of Collective Action. In fairness to Olson, we should note that he meant to account for the mobilization of longstanding unions, lobbies, and interest groups; he didn't mean to account for the mobilization of collective action that is more drastic or short-lived. However, the thrust of the field in recent years is to abandon sharp distinctions between dramatic social movements and other political organizations. Now, it may

be worth considering the circumstances in which Olson's utilitarian logic does not fit social movements, or for that matter, collective action in general.

Olson was helpful in demonstrating that rational people with common interests don't automatically pursue them collectively. It's often difficult for people to get together and pool resources. Mobilization requires enterprise and effort. But when we investigate the strategy and tactics of organizers, we find Olson's logic misleading. We find that only in special circumstances is it both possible and worthwhile to use "selective incentives" to get people to struggle for common interests. More often, when events and organizers mobilize people, it is because they build solidarity, raise consciousness of common interests, and create opportunities for collective action.

So, we begin this essay with a critical look at how utilitarian logic has been applied to the mobilization of collective action. We go on to suggest that an alternative approach offers more promising ground for advancing research within the resource mobilization perspective.

Resource Mobilization and Utilitarian Logic

Research from the resource mobilization perspective finds people's shared grievances, interests, and aspirations considerably less problematic than their capacity to act on them collectively. From this perspective, the key question asked of a social movement is no longer:

"Why do these people want social change so badly and believe that it's possible?" but rather:

"How can these people organize, pool resources, and wield them effectively?"

It might seem that for a good part of our answer to the latter question, we would soon return to the former one. After all, isn't it easier to bring people into a social movement when they find the movement's goals and strategies worthwhile? Surely, the less concerned that potential constituents are about the social change the movement is demanding, the more difficult it is for the movement to organize them. So, shouldn't students and organizers of mobilization focus their concern on the substance and intensity of shared grievances, interests, and aspirations?

Perhaps not -- at least not if we accept the implications of Olson's Logic of Collective Action (1965). Oberschall (1973) and McCarthy and Zald (1977) apply Olson's logic specifically to social movements. They suggest that a theory of mobilization should focus on the costs and benefits selectively meted out to potential constituents contingent upon whether or not they contribute to collective action. Shared grievances and interests may warrant less attention for one of several possible reasons.

First, people look out for their personal self-interest. They act collectively only if they are provided with selective incentives. Or, second: everywhere there is an abundance of interests to be realized and injustices to be protested. They may help us delimit the groups "at risk" to mobilization, but they do not help us select which potential groups we expect to mobilize a lot, a little, or not at all. Or, third: perhaps changes in the substance and intensity of shared interests affect the propensity of potential groups to mobilize, but not in decisive ways. "Objective" interests change only with long-run historical processes; their impact upon the rapid dynamics of mobilization is mediated by processes that are more proximate and variable. "Subjective" interests may vary in the short run, but they

are less problematic than the various forces which shape them. In other words, collective interests are either not proximate enough, or not problematic enough, to occupy center stage in the study of social movements.

We find these arguments dubious.² We don't deny that mobilization is heavily influenced by a number of factors slighted in traditional social movement research: the amount of resources at the discretion of potential constituents, the degree of previously existing organization among potential constituents, the configuration of allies and enemies, the social control policies of authorities, the strategy and tactics of organizers, and -- overall -- the structure of the political economy constraining the mobilization and wielding of resources.

But the impact of these factors upon mobilization for collective action is often mediated more by changes in group interests than by changes in the provision of "selective incentives," more by assessments of collective efficacy than by assessments of individual efficacy, more by solidarity and principle than by individual self-interest.

Before going into the argument, we should indicate what we mean by some key terms: "collective good," "selective incentive," "actor," and "collective action." Any good or service or state of affairs is a collective good insofar as everyone in some group can benefit from it (or enjoy it), regardless of whether or not they help to pay the cost of providing it. For example, a change in government policy, or a change in working conditions, is a collective good for everyone who wants it to happen. In this paper the redress of shared grievances, the realization of shared interests, the achievement of whatever is justified by shared beliefs -- these matters are considered collective goods for all who share the grievances, interests, or beliefs.

Selective incentives are constraints or inducements which an individual actor may gain or lose contingent upon whether or not the actor contributes to collective action. Actors are persons as well as organizations with tight decision-making and social control mechanisms. We assume here (for the sake of argument), that actors may be interested in the occurrence of various states of affairs much as they may be interested in the possession of various commodities. We assume further that the degree to which they are interested in each of the variety of relevant collective goods and selective incentives, can be measured in comparable units. Collective action is struggle to bring about collective goods, struggle which involves organizing actors and mobilizing resources. Collective actors are organizers and formal organizations whose primary purpose is to carry on such a struggle.

Consider the first and strongest of the three arguments cited above on why grievances and interests may be removed from center stage in the study of collective action. Olson argues that people act collectively only when there are "selective incentives" for them to do so (1965). He takes a utilitarian model of behavior in a market economy, and applies it to collective action in general:

The rational individual in the economic system does not curtail his spending to prevent inflation . . . because he knows, first, that his own efforts would not have a noticeable effect, and second, that he would get the benefits of any price stability that others achieved in any case. For the

same two reasons, the rational individual in a socio-political context will not be willing to make any sacrifices to achieve the objectives he shares with others (p. 166).

Only a separate and "selective" incentive will stimulate a rational individual in a (large) group to act in a group-oriented way . . . group action can be obtained only through an incentive that operates, not indiscriminately, like the collective good, upon the group as a whole, but rather selectively toward the individuals in the group (p. 151).

Olson concludes that common interest in collective goods is not sufficient for a large group of actors to get together for collective action, while the provision of selective incentives is necessary for it. So mild a conclusion may be surprising. Much stronger conclusions are there to be derived from the utilitarian assumption that he relies on. If individuals are thoroughly self-interested and rational, common interests are unnecessary to collective action as well as insufficient -- in fact they are irrelevant. Furthermore, the provision of selective incentives is not only necessary to produce collective action but is sufficient.

What implications could social movement organizers draw from the utilitarian logic of collective action? Evidently it's a waste of time for organizers to demonstrate to potential constituents that their goals are worthwhile and their strategy is viable. Consciousness-raising cannot move actors whose pursuit of self-interest is unflagging. It seems that movement propaganda should advertise selective incentives rather than justify program and strategy.

Furthermore, when organizers target potential constituents for organizing drives, they needn't be concerned with who may be most inter-

ested in the collective goods they're trying to bring about. They need only be concerned with who may be most interested in the selective incentives they can offer. Social movement organizations should often find themselves competing with other organizations for the resources of their potential constituents. There is no reason to expect this competition to come only from other collective actors. Social movement organizations are actually at a competitive disadvantage in providing selective incentives compared to businesses, social clubs, and mafiosa, for example. None of these organizations is saddled with the burden of diverting resources for the provision of collective goods; they can offer a better deal in the selective incentives market.

In fact much of the collective action cited by Olson as evidence for his argument was mobilized by organizers who were at a competitive disadvantage in the selective incentives market as compared to their own antagonists. Consider the struggles that established the first big unions. Employers could hire, promote, or fire workers according to their stance toward the union. If union organizers could try to coerce wavering workers to honor picket lines, employers could hire scabs and thugs to disrupt them. Employers could often call on the government for help. And when employers chose to wield the "carrot" in addition to the "stick," they had the resources to provide more "social incentives" (e.g. status symbols and sociable occasions) and fringe benefits than those a struggling union could offer.

Olson does not explicitly portray the actors who join in collective action as though they scramble for individual benefits in a wide open market where collective actors would be well-advised to advertise selective incentives rather than programs. But the assumptions underlying his conclusions do imply so crude a picture. If it is hard to believe that

collective actors do their mobilizing in a selective incentives market, and if it is hard to believe that an actor's interest in collective goods is irrelevant to his propensity to join in collective action, then we must question Olson's conclusion that selective incentives are necessary for collective action.

Perhaps the appeal of the Logic of Collective Action to those who study social movements lies not in the plausibility of its assumptions or conclusions, but rather in the questions it suggests for our research agenda:

- 1) Of the many groups that could possibly mobilize to struggle for collective goods, how is it that some are able to mobilize a great deal, others much less, and many none at all?
- 2) How do actors assess what may be gained and lost through collective action, and how do such assessments shape their decisions to join in it?
- 3) How can mobilization be facilitated by "resourceful actors" -- often previously established organizations and experienced organizers who control crucial resources?

These are good questions. But Olson's delimitation of groups at risk to mobilization, his handling of the free rider problem, and his treatment of resourceful actors present serious difficulties. We discuss these difficulties as a prelude to later discussion of an alternative approach.

Who is at Risk to Mobilization

Take as a problem the investigation of a population at time $t-1$ in order to predict for time t what groups will be engaged in collective

action. If the time interval is long enough (say a year or five years), it may be that a number of organizations engaged in collective action at time t did not even exist at time $t-1$, and it may be that some interests pursued fervently at t weren't articulated or even sensed at $t-1$. Until we specify the purpose and the theory underlying the investigation, it is not clear what combinations of people, organizations, roles, statuses, objective interests, and/or subjective interests extant in the population at time $t-1$ we should investigate to see if they give rise to collective action at t .

In Logic of Collective Action the entities at risk to mobilization are "groups" -- defined as aggregates of individuals sharing common interests. More precisely, Olson considers an aggregate of actors to be at risk to mobilization when some collective good is worth more to each "group" member than his share of what it would cost to bring about the good were all "group" members to contribute their share. He also suggests that already mobilized organizations tend to demobilize -- perish, even -- if they fail to serve the common interests of their members. So according to Olson, a group has the potential to mobilize or to survive as a viable collective actor when the total worth (to group members) of the collective goods exceeds the total cost (to group members) of the collective action it takes to bring them about.

But then Olson goes on to argue that the group won't realize this potential unless its members are provided with selective incentives. He states that in order to facilitate mobilization, the value of the selective incentives (in terms of each individual's preferences) must be greater than the individual's share of the cost of collective action. This is a bold assertion. Evidently Olson believes that until the worth of the collective good exceeds the cost of collective action, mobilization is out of the question; but once that threshold is exceeded, further increase

in the worth of the collective good is irrelevant. From then on, mobilization hinges only on the worth of the selective incentives.

Olson's utilitarian assumptions are so heavy they vitiate his initial method of selecting groups to investigate. After all, if the value of the selective incentives must exceed the cost of joining in collective action, then why be concerned with common interest in collective goods when selecting groups to investigate? Even actors who are thoroughly indifferent to the collective good would be apt to participate in collective action if offered selective incentives worth more than the cost of participation. (We don't doubt that social movement organizers provide such valuable selective incentives when they have the capacity to gain by doing so; we do doubt that they generally have this capacity, and we doubt that they generally need it to succeed.) It is possible that many social processes may be best understood with a theory positing that one variable only limits the outcomes while another variable only selects within the limits. But we can think of no good reason why actors' common interest in collective goods should preclude their mobilization when it's below a threshold level, yet be irrelevant above that level.

It would not help matters to abandon common interests altogether and move to a thoroughly utilitarian analysis of what limits who is at risk to mobilization. It might make sense to do so were we studying the "mobilization" of labor by business firms. The unemployed, for example, are especially at risk to mobilization by a business offering pay for work, regardless of how much they are interested in the goods that business is trying to produce. But does it make sense to assume that people in need of the selective incentives that a social movement can offer are especially at risk to mobilization, regardless of what social change the movement is trying to produce? Whether or not one's taste for chocolate

affects one's propensity to take a job in a chocolate factory, surely one's taste for civil rights affects one's propensity to join in a civil rights movement.

Later we argue that a number of factors, including interest in individual goods, interest in collective goods, and solidarity with others interested in collective goods, may all move actors to mobilize for collective action. Our discussion of how this is so, centers on solidary groups -- each a network of actors linked by relations to be described below, each with broad interests that conflict at key points with those of other groups, and each with members who may be more or less "resourceful." Long run predictions about who will mobilize what kind of collective action can only emerge from historical analysis of how economic and geopolitical forces (often themselves the outcome of past collective action) structure and interrelate these solidary groups. Short run predictions about mobilization can rest on analysis of how particular events confront solidary groups with concrete threats and opportunities, how they raise group members' consciousness of common interests, and how they raise group members' loyalty to the collective actors who defend common interests.

One could take a set of actors to be "at risk" to mobilization according to the degree that they are a solidary group, to the degree that they face concrete opportunities and threats to their interests, and to the degree that some resourceful actors (inside or outside the group) are interested in having them mobilize. There is no marked threshold level with any of these factors below which groups are incapable of mobilizing. The same factors that delimit the potential

mobilizers also select the actual mobilizers.

Although Olson chose potential mobilizers differently, our objection is less to Olson's choice of groups to consider than to his claim that want of selective incentives is what keeps most of them from mobilizing. He concludes the book commenting:

". . . large unorganized groups not only provide evidence for the basic argument of this study: they also suffer if it is true." They do suffer. But their silence cannot tell us why they fail to mobilize. Unmobilized groups are a problem for investigation but their continued existence cannot be evidence for any explanation of itself.

The Free Rider Problem

We are persuaded that calculations of what may be gained and lost through collective action are very important to actors' decisions to join in collective action. But contrary to utilitarian logic, we think that actors assess what their group may gain or lose as well as what they may gain or lose as individuals.

At the heart of the utilitarian approach to collective action is the "free rider" problem. The idea is that it makes little sense for an actor to join in collective action when he can "ride free" on the efforts of others. The free rider argument is developed, in large part, by the pursuit of two analogies. First and foremost, actors with common interests

are compared to firms in a competitive market. Second, groups that do successfully mobilize are compared to governments. Despite strong common interests, firms in the competitive market don't act collectively. And despite much legitimacy, patriotism, and loyalty, governments rely on coercion to raise revenues and armies. Olson draws the wrong lesson from each of these analogies.

There is a concise statement of the first analogy in the argument of Olson's which we quoted above:

The rational individual in the economic system does not curtail his spending to prevent inflation because he knows, first, that his own efforts would not have a noticeable effect, and second, that he would get the benefits of any price stability that others achieved in any case. For the same two reasons, the rational individual in the large group in a socio-political context will not be willing to make any sacrifices to achieve the objectives he shares with others (p. 166).

We submit that it makes little sense to attribute the failure of this rational individual to curtail spending to the two reasons that Olson gives. The individual is likely to have the quite plausible expectation that there will not be enough other people curtailing spending to produce any effect. Olson's reasons become relevant only if the individual is faced with collective action that stands a chance of success. By and large, it is reasonable for the individual to expect that the actors who share his interests will not mobilize effectively when they lack the organization to communicate and coordinate commitments.

When it does seem that collective action will actually take place and may succeed, would-be free riders may present problems for organizers

and students of collective action. How should they be dealt with? Olson's answer is selective incentives, but what of ideology, class consciousness, and solidarity? Olson presents the analogy of the state:

. . . despite the force of patriotism, the appeal of national ideology, the bond of a common culture . . . no major state in modern history has been able to support itself through voluntary dues or contributions . . . (p. 13)

If any lesson is to be drawn from this unfortunate fact, it isn't that selective incentives are necessary for collective action; it is rather that organizations powerful enough to force contributions from constituents, will do so. However, most social movement organizations are poor in the resources necessary to impose taxes or a draft. And unlike governments, social movements vary considerably in their capacity to tolerate free riders. When 300,000 anti-war demonstrators turned out for a march on Washington during the sixties, they were not hamstrung by the existence of millions of free riders -- people who wanted the demonstration to be big and effective but didn't show up. On the other hand, the Tobacco Night Riders had much to lose and little to gain unless they could control their free riders -- the farmers who sold tobacco directly to the tobacco trust instead of marketing it through the Planters' Protective Association (see Gamson, 1975). Free riders pose different kinds of problems in different kinds of struggles.

Some of the factors that affect a collective action's tolerance for free riders include the cost to participants if collective action fails, the fraction of the constituency necessary for success, the visibility of the constituency's boundaries and common interests, the

amount of middle ground between active support for collective action and direct aid to its target, the degree to which the collective good sought by the movement is "exclusive,"³ and the degree to which free riding violates specific commitments and norms.

Free riders are least tolerable in a struggle, when failure would be costly to participants and the chances of success don't amount to much until a large fraction of a readily identifiable constituency is mobilized. For example, free riders are generally less tolerable in a strike than in a demonstration. This is so regardless of whether the mobilizing agent is a union, a political committee, or the leaders of a solidary group. The capacity of participants to make up for what free riders withhold varies more with the structure of the struggle than with the group involved. When the outcome of a struggle depends upon the money organizers can raise -- perhaps to pay for professional lobbyists and campaign contributions -- participants can often increase their contributions to make up for what is withheld by free riders. But when free riders plague a strike or a boycott, it is less feasible for participants to strike or boycott harder than it is for them to switch tactics.

It makes a difference to participants whether free riders are violating commitments to contribute, and whether they are violating norms against free riding. We suggested above that expectations about whether others will contribute are often important to assessments of the chances that collective action may accomplish something worthwhile. Actors communicate their commitment to act in order to provide the basis for each other's assessments of what kind of collective action is possible. Group norms specifying appropriate conduct for a strike, or a food riot, or any collective action in a group's repertoire may also provide a basis for expectations that other group members will do

their share. When free riders go back on prior commitments and violate norms, they undermine grounds for others' participation, and thereby threaten to set off a reverse bandwagon.

Like governments, the collective actors that are least tolerant of constituents who would ride for free, are often those who must deal with constituents who would rather not ride at all. The more the bounds of the constituency are fixed by "objective" criteria -- rather than including just those actors in sympathy with the social movement -- the more possible it is that what is a collective good to some constituents is a collective bad to others, and what seems like a viable strategy to some constituents seems immoral or impractical to others. A revolutionary movement raises such problems when it extends its constituency from its sympathizers to the population of some territory, by claiming to be a government. We have already suggested that it makes little sense to invoke utilitarian logic to account for nonparticipation when the collective action stands little chance of success; it makes just as little sense when there is not much reason to assume nonparticipants want the collective good. The assumption that each actor pursues only his own interests, tends to obscure differences between free riding, inefficacy, and indifference as well as differences in how these separate problems may be handled by organizers. It implies that all three problems can be solved only when prior organizations or political "entrepreneurs" offer selective incentives.

All in all, utilitarian logic constitutes a bad basis for investigating variance in how extensive free riding is, how tolerable it is, and how social movement organizations handle it in different types of struggles and different types of constituencies. Utilitarian logic steers us away from studying how collective action is constrained by ordinary actors'

assessments of what their group may gain and lose through alternative courses of action.

Resourceful Actors

Be they politicians, prophets, business firms, or voluntary associations, we call them 'resourceful actors' insofar as each of them has the capacity to contribute a significant part of what it takes to bring about the collective good. By and large, we share Olson's conviction that the mobilization of a large group happens only when it is facilitated by contributions from resourceful actors. But we differ with utilitarian accounts of how resourceful actors facilitate mobilization, and when they decide to do so.

Olson focuses on long standing organizations which have a surplus of resources that they are ready and willing to contribute for the provision of a collective good. The surplus is a 'by-product' of past mobilization maintained by the ongoing provision of selective incentives. Other utilitarians model the efforts of individual organizers as well as the efforts of long standing organizations. Organizers may offer selective incentives even though they lack the resources to provide them right away. Like entrepreneurs, organizers try to create or pool resources by using their skills and connections to convince constituents that they will be able to deliver selective incentives in the future (see Frohlich, Oppenheimer, and Young, 1971).

But often resourceful actors facilitate mobilization without promising or providing selective incentives. Particularly in the early stages of mobilization, organizers try to convince ordinary constituents not that joining in collective action will bring about benefits only for those who join, but rather that collective action will bring about a collective good.

Compared to the former kind of influence this latter kind may be produced with different and perhaps fewer resources. There are important differences between persuading constituents to make an exchange, and persuading constituents to make a contribution. Some resources -- money, weapons, and printing presses -- may be used in both endeavors, and, these resources are often available only if contributed by long standing organizations. But resources must be wielded differently if they are being used to back up selective incentives than if they are being used for a number of alternative tasks -- to help constituents understand their common stake in a collective good, to alert constituents to threats and opportunities, to propose a course of action, to gather and communicate commitments, to organize decision making, and to co-ordinate action. In the latter half of this paper, we suggest that if these tasks are done well, then in some situations many ordinary actors mobilize without selective incentives.

When do resourceful actors decide to contribute to collective action? In Olson's account, they do so when it is likely to get them collective goods worth more than the cost of participating, collective goods that wouldn't be forthcoming without their participation. In the complementary account by Frohlich et al (1971) 'entrepreneurs' organize collective action when they can expect to get for themselves some of what is to be mobilized and won through collective action, something worth more than the cost of mobilizing. In our account, on the other hand, resourceful actors as well as ordinary actors may participate on the basis of solidarity and principle.

Two final points on resourceful actors are worth stressing. When we call an organization a 'resourceful actor' we assume that the internal mobilization and social control of the organization over its members are

not problematic, at least not for the purpose of the given investigation. When an army, a corporation, or an already mobilized political party, fights for collective goods, they are of interest here only insofar as they are centrally concerned with the mobilization of ordinary actors for the struggle. Much of Olson's discussion is not relevant to theories of mobilization because it focuses on actors for whom mobilization has become a routine matter of organizational maintenance.

Note also that much social organization crucial to mobilization is informal rather than formal. It isn't easy to see how the effects of informal organization upon mobilization can be understood from the utilitarian perspective. An informal organization--such as a community or a network of people--cannot be treated as an actor that sanctions people according to whether or not they join in collective action. If a community or network lacks a tight internal control structure, each member of the community or network must be taken as a decision-maker with individual self interests. When informally organized individuals sanction would-be free riders, the sanctioning is itself a problematic form of collective action that needs to be explained.

Soft Selective Incentives

We have pointed out a number of difficulties with Olson's Logic of Collective Action. Utilitarians may be tempted to escape the difficulties by softening the concept of selective incentives rather than by diminishing its role in the explanation of collective action. Assume that we are all agreed that in some situations people act because it would be disloyal and irresponsible not to act. The problem for students of mobilization then becomes how to predict when solidarity and principle will impel people to collective action.

Does the concept of selective incentives facilitate this endeavor? After all, if people experience satisfaction, guilt, or shame depending on whether they join in a worthwhile collective action or ride free, then it's simple enough to designate satisfaction, guilt, and shame as potent selective incentives. Why not allow moral satisfaction and money to count as simply different types of selective incentives?

To follow this route is to destroy the *raison d'etre* of the selective incentive argument by reducing it to a useless tautology.⁴ One begins by making it a matter of assumption that people don't participate in collective action unless they get something of value for participation. Therefore, if one finds no specific good or service that a participant receives, one postulates some "soft" selective incentive such as moral satisfaction, friendship, alleviation of guilt and the like.

Under such an approach, any explanation can easily enough be recast into a utilitarian framework. Take, for example, the frustration-aggression argument. An individual is upset and frustrated about his slow advancement in career and turns to collective action that enables him to express his pent-up aggression at some handy scapegoat. The pleasure of releasing frustration becomes the selective incentive that the person receives for participation.

To follow this tautological route is to remove the cutting-edge from the selective incentive argument. If one blurs together such diverse incentives as satisfaction with participating in a worthwhile cause and some specific material inducement, the statement that people participate because of selective incentives loses interest. Immediately, one must ask whether material incentives or some other kind of incentives are involved. Any apparent parsimony in explanation is lost and the idea of selective

incentives becomes so much excess baggage since the weight of explanation is carried by the subsequent distinctions among incentives.

There is an additional danger in broadening the concept of selective incentives in this fashion. Although "soft" selective incentives are allowed into the definition, this fact is often ignored in subsequent argument where examples focus on clear-cut, material incentives. Arguments that may well hold with respect to a specific material incentive are frequently problematic with respect to non-material incentives but this difficulty is never faced in a forthright fashion.

We believe that the utilitarian argument for the value of selective incentives in promoting collective action has some usefulness but only if it is defined narrowly. We suggest that it be limited to inducements or constraints, that is, some positive or negative sanction that is added to the situation of the actor.⁵ When participation works through something other than sanctions, other concepts are more useful than selective incentives. If an actor participates because he feels that some solidarity group with which he identifies is threatened or because he feels responsibility to contribute his share to getting some collective good, no useful purpose is served and something of value is lost by forcing such considerations into a utilitarian mold. The second part of this paper and the Appendix suggest an alternative model in which selective incentives, narrowly defined, are given their due.

An Alternative Approach to Mobilization

So far we have criticized the utilitarian approach to collective action for exaggerating the role of self-interest in mobilization while obscuring the role of solidarity and principle. What do we mean by solidarity and principle? How are they developed, changed, strengthened? How and when do they facilitate mobilization? In the remainder of the paper we discuss these issues. Then in the Appendix, we present the same argument more formally.

Our starting point is some constituency -- a solidary group which may be more or less solidary. Perhaps some collective actor has called upon this solidary group to mobilize for collective action. Or perhaps some social analyst has identified the group as a population whose propensity to mobilize is of interest. Either way, we discuss the contribution of solidarity and principle to the group's propensity to mobilize.

Solidarity

Solidarity is rooted in the configuration of relationships linking the members of a group to each other. People may be linked together in a number of ways which generate a sense of common identity, shared fate, and general commitment to defend the group. Drawing on Stinchcombe (1975) and Gamson (1968), we suggest five factors which constitute the basis for a person's solidarity with a group:

- a. Friends and relatives. To the extent that a person has friends and relatives within the group, and to the extent that he is indirectly related to others in the group through their friendship and kinship with his friends and kin, he has a basis for solidarity with the group.

- b. Participation in organizations. To the extent that a person acts collectively with other members of the group in productive organizations, voluntary associations, clubs, and other associations, he has a basis for solidarity with the group.
- c. Design for living. Groups frequently offer members a set of techniques for handling the problems they encounter in their daily lives -- problems like finding and keeping a good job and a good spouse, making friends, raising children, staying out of trouble, and getting treated with dignity and respect. In trying to implement some design for going through life, a person may rely to a greater or lesser degree on support from other people and organizations in the solidary group. To the extent that a person's design for living is shared and supported by other group members more than by outsiders, he has a basis for solidarity with the group.
- d. Subordinate and superordinate relations. To the extent that a person shares with other group members the same set of subordinate and superordinate relations with outsiders, he has a basis for solidarity with the group.
- e. No exit. To the extent that a person is readily identified and often treated as a member of the group, and exit from the group is difficult, he has a basis for solidarity with the group.

A person whose life is intertwined with the group in these ways has a big stake in the group's fate. When collective action is urgent, the person is likely to contribute his or her share even if the impact of

that share is not noticeable. Our argument, then, is that the relationships characterized above generate solidarity and that this becomes an important basis for mobilization.

Can an organizer create or strengthen a network of solidary relations within a constituency? The solidarity of a constituency must often be taken by organizers as the enduring result of long run historical forces. In the short run it is hard to create solidary relations within an aggregate of unconnected individuals; it is even hard to intensify solidarity where it already exists. So experienced organizers pay attention to the density and quality of solidary relations within a constituency when assessing its potential for mobilization. When a constituency lacks solidarity, mobilization efforts are likely to fail.

A recent article by Burlingham (1977) describes the efforts of the Rhode Island Workers Association (RIWA) to organize the unemployed. He quotes at length from one of RIWA's professional organizers, George Nee:

You have to think of the glue that holds a group together. We were organizing people around being unemployed. Well, being unemployed is not part of a person's identity -- like being on welfare, or being a worker, or being a member of an ethnic group. They didn't think of themselves as unemployed. They didn't really identify with other people who were unemployed. The only local chapters that took hold had other factors going for them. The East Bay group was mainly made up of Portuguese immigrants. West Warwick is an old, white working-class area, a cohesive community with high unemployment. And in both cases organizers emerged from the local communities. That didn't happen elsewhere (pp. 20-21).

When working within a low-solidarity constituency, organizers tend to focus their efforts on the actors who are most central to whatever solidary networks do exist. Sometimes people who are central to different networks within a constituency can be brought together to share experiences and develop a basis for cooperation. Kahn (1970, page 35) suggests that "The organizer use . . . techniques to bring together those people he feels need to know each other in the sense of sharing together the experiences and conversations they have shared with him."

If organizers are building for a long struggle, they have much to gain by undertaking the difficult process of strengthening solidary relations within the constituency. Clubs and voluntary associations may be formed, encouraged, and linked to each other. Cultural events can promote the group's "design for living"; while collective goods may be provided which make the "design" work for constituents in their daily lives. Some collective actions may be organized less because of their potential for winning collective goods directly and more for the solidarity they are likely to produce. Social events, even rituals, can be useful in strengthening the solidary relations that help to sustain a collective actor during quiescent times and then facilitate rapid mobilization when collective action is urgent. It should be one of the empirical tasks of research from the resource mobilization perspective to identify what strategies are most useful under what conditions for increasing solidarity.

Group Interests

Solidary groups have interests, some intense and others less so. In any given collective action, there may be more or less at stake for a constituent solidary group. Strengthening a person's ties to a solidary group boosts his propensity to join in collective action only insofar as the group has much at stake in the fate of collective action. So how do we determine a group's interests?

When assessing a group's short run prospects for mobilizing, we look at the group's subjective interests.⁶ The group has a subjective interest in whatever collective goods are believed by group members to affect their chances of having what they most ardently try to get, say they want, and claim they deserve. So, we infer subjective interests from the primary pursuits of the group's leading actors, the goals they articulate, and the principles embedded in the group's design for living.

When assessing a group's long run prospects for mobilizing, we must consider both the group's current subjective interests and its objective interests. The group can be assumed to have an objective interest in a collective good to the extent that the good promotes the long run wealth and power of the group and the viability of its design for living (whether or not these consequences are known to group members). Objective interests exert an important influence on subjective ones. The former are more enduring; the latter affect mobilization more directly. The former are most difficult to take into account. But the longer the time frame under consideration, the more necessary it is to do so.

How do the interests of a solidary group get linked to a program of collective action? There are several ways that a collective actor may identify its program with constituents' group interests, and thereby harness constituents' solidarity for collective action. Sometimes a social movement emerges through the actions of the leaders of a long-standing solidary group. Social movement structure is then coextensive with the structure of the constituency. If such a movement produces a formal organization with a concrete program, constituents are apt to support the program and be loyal to the organization right away. The counterrevolution in the Vendée appears to have been such

a movement. It spread quickly and dramatically as solidary groups in the region identified with it, and felt that the viability of their design for living hinged on its fate (see Tilly, 1964). In such a case, the movement organization appears to be the arm of its constituents, fighting for their common interests.

But what do social movement organizers do when they are not the longstanding leaders of their constituent solidary group, and when their goals do not jibe with the group's subjective interests? Then they may acquire solidary group support more deliberately, by one of two paths. First, they can woo the solidary group. They can shelve their ultimate goals and develop a program that is closer to the group's subjective interests (or they can appear to do so); they can bargain for support with the group's leaders, and they can try to "raise the consciousness" of key actors within the group so as to move it in line with the movement.

But this path is not always feasible. Perhaps the constituency's pursuits and principles are incompatible with those of the organizers. Perhaps the leaders of the constituency oppose collective action outright. Constituents who join in collective action may face loss of support from their solidary group. In this kind of situation, the organizers may try to make the movement itself the locus of a network of solidary relations. There may be deliberate efforts to promote a "design for living" with supporting institutions more compatible with the organizers' program.

On this second path, organizers sidestep the core leaders of the old solidary group along with their close affiliates, while wooing more sympathetic subgroups. By and large, the solidarity of a constituency is uneven; and there may well be subgroups in some conflict with, or isolation from, its dominant actors. Organizers may appeal to a subgroup by

accommodating their program to subgroup interests. Perhaps they can formulate and advance demands on issues of particular concern to the subgroup. If subgroup members can be attracted to the movement on the basis of principle or common interest, they may develop loyalty to the movement as they develop solidary relations among its supporters.

This second path to social movement mobilization -- that of forging new solidary relations rather than harnessing old ones -- bears some resemblance to that posited by mass society theory. Though many of the social movements which concern us emerge from longstanding solidary groups whose interests clash with those of authorities, here we consider movements which must await (or bring about) the weakening of certain solidary relations that block collective action. We recognize, then, that some configurations of solidary relations cross cut and interlock classes, races, and religions; and we recognize that some cohesive solidary groups encourage their members to accept certain ongoing forms of oppression. Historical forces that weaken such solidarities may increase a population's propensity to collective action. We also recognize that a social movement may offer a refuge for people who abandon or are abandoned by their prior solidary groups.

Nevertheless, there is a crucial difference between our argument here and various "breakdown" theories of collective action, including mass society theory. We assume that people who drift without solidary relations, without firm principles, anxious, atomized, anomic -- such people are unlikely to mobilize for collective action. Even the social movement's least rooted in prior solidary groups are less likely to attract drifters than principled actors who have stable interests in the collective goods sought by the movement.

To align a program of collective action with the interests of constituents, organizers need to understand constituents. To mobilize through networks of solidary relations among constituents, organizers need to earn constituents' trust. So it helps if organizers can fit in with their solidary networks and understand their experiences. Alinsky advises us that "Since people understand only in terms of their own experience, an organizer must have at least a cursory familiarity with their experience. It not only serves communication, but it strengthens the personal identification of the organizer with the others" (1971, page 84). Or, to quote Kahn:

In some ways, the organizer's main job in the community in the early stages of organizing is simply to make friends with the people there . . . Generally, an effective organizer will have a good deal in common with the people he is working among. In the mountains of North Carolina, for example, it helps to know a lot about fishing, hunting, pulpwooding, farming, trucks, country music, raising tobacco, shotguns, dogs, and religion . . . If an organizer does not share knowledge and experiences with the people he is working among, he will have a hard time communicating with them (1970, pp. 5, 26).

For similar reasons, the O.M. Collective suggests that organizers gain advantages in working with their own "age, class, and occupational group" (1971, page 38). It should be one of the empirical tasks of resource mobilization theory to identify what strategies in what situations work best to align the program of a social movement with the interests of a solidary constituency.

Personal Interest in Collective Goods

Not only do solidary groups have interests, but individuals also have interests in the preservation or achievement of various collective goods. They may have various reasons for valuing these collective goods -- some of them selfish and some quite altruistic. These valuations may be identical to those of their most important solidary groups, or, in some cases, they may disagree.

There is a particularly relevant sub-set of collective goods for the mobilization process. Certain collective goods may be perceived as an entitlement, as something deserved as a matter of justice, equity, or right. We propose to use the term "principles" to refer to this sub-set.

Collective actors frequently attempt to appeal to the principles of their constituents as a way of mobilizing support. They approach them with some vision of justice or equity with which they hope to raise some righteous anger. Discontent needs to be focused and channeled; the connections between proximate events and more abstract states of the system must be developed. Political education, ideological discussion, study groups, consciousness-raising sessions, newsletters and political tracts frequently are intended to raise personal interest in the collective goods being promoted.

People's allegiance to the goals of a collective actor cannot be taken for granted as arising spontaneously from their social conditions. Alinsky (1971) advises us that:

Men don't like to step abruptly out of the security of familiar experience; they need a bridge across from their own experience to a new way. A revolutionary organizer must shake up the prevailing pattern of their lives -- agitate, create disenchantment

and discontent with the current values, to produce, if not a passion for change, at least a passive, affirmative non-challenging climate (page xxi).

Other professional organizers offer similar advice against assuming support for the purpose of collective action. The O.M. Collective points out that "Few people see themselves as abstractly 'oppressed' although they are acutely aware of the daily struggle to eat, make a happy home, educate their kids, keep their draft age boys alive, hold some hope for the future -- in short, to live like human beings" (1971, page 40).

Wernette (1976) suggests that:

There are a number of ways in which the value of a collective good can be increased for the individual. One such way entails linking the collective good to other collective goods by means of an ideological analysis . . . In addition, the individual, by seeing the sacrifices made by others in contributing to the provisions of the collective good, notes the value of the good to them (1976, page 11).

There is no magic formula for raising the value of the collective good, but imaginative mobilizing agents are constantly looking for opportunities to do it. Sometimes events occur that present mobilizing agents with consciousness raising opportunities. Sometimes they can stage their own events or actions. Yippie activities, such as throwing dollar bills on members of the New York Stock Exchange or guerrilla theatre have such a purpose. The aim of guerrilla theatre, the O.M. Collective argues:

. . . is to create a metaphor or symbolic revelation of reality

that will force people to see and to think about the world in new ways. The metaphor seizes upon the essence of everyday events and, through exaggeration, distortion, and change of context, strips them of their familiar aspects -- "blows them up" to expose the shocking truths within (page 73).

It should be one of the empirical tasks of resource mobilization theory to identify what strategies and tactics are most useful under what conditions for raising personal interest in collective goods.

The Urgency of Collective Action

Mobilization is more likely when collective action is more urgent. Urgency is a straightforward function of necessity and opportunity. Whatever events lower the chances that constituents can realize their interests without collective action, thereby raise the necessity for collective action. Whatever events raise the chances that collective action can successfully promote or protect constituents' interests, thereby raise the opportunity for collective action.

Collective action, then, is most urgent when there is no reason to believe that collective goods will be preserved without collective action, and every reason to believe that they can be preserved through collective action. We say "preserved" without adding "or brought about" only to suggest that many constituencies, especially ones that are poor and poorly organized, have a stronger subjective interest in protecting existing collective goods than in winning new ones. But once the strength of a group's interest in a collective good is given, we mean "urgency" to be not a matter of whether the group already has the good, but rather a matter of the difference collective action will make to constituents' chances of having it in the future. (See the Appendix for a more formal treatment of

these issues.)

Here we mention some ways that various events can affect the necessity and opportunity for collective action. Sometimes organizers can only prepare for such events and await them. Other times it is possible to precipitate them.

1. Necessity

What kind of events lower the chances that constituents can realize their interests without collective action? Unfortunately for those who want to predict mobilization, new threats to group interests can come from just about anywhere (within broad limits set by the nature of the group and the political economy of its environment). Authorities can break commitments to the group, reverse policies that were beneficial, and form alliances with the group's enemies. Authorities can repress the group's organizations and leaders. The collective action of outsiders can threaten to damage some state of affairs that the group has a stake in conserving. Employers can speed up the work process, tighten discipline, cut wages, fire militants. When ongoing processes erode constituents' access to jobs, markets, land, or whatever else they need to secure a livelihood, particular events epitomizing the deteriorating situation can be especially threatening.

If events can increase the necessity of collective action by posing direct threats to specific group interests, events can also increase the necessity of collective action more diffusely by reducing constituents' trust in authorities. Authorities often pretend to be above conflicts of interest among various groups under their rule. They claim to have the intention and capacity to provide collective goods that benefit everyone by benefitting the whole country. The extent to which people believe such

claims varies considerably, over time and between constituencies. Sometimes when agents of authority support the group's enemies, restrict the group's access to government protection and welfare services, and otherwise violate the group's principles of justice, group members still trust that higher authorities will rectify the situation. No matter how seriously their interests are threatened, the actors in a constituency may fail to mobilize until they lose the trust that authorities will take care of things sooner or later. So the necessity of collective action can be raised by events which display authorities' bad faith, and highlight their conflicts of interest with constituents.

It is just such reasoning that leads Lenin to call strikes "a school of war:"

A strike . . . opens the eyes of the workers to the nature, not only of the capitalists, but of the government and laws as well . . . Soldiers are even ordered to fire on the workers and when they kill unarmed workers by shooting the fleeing crowd in the back, the tsar himself sends the troops an expression of gratitude. . . . It becomes clear to every worker that the tsarist government is his worst enemy, since it defends the capitalists and binds the workers hand and foot (1960, IV, pp. 316-17).

A collective action under consideration may be only one of several alternative courses of action, each advocated by a rival collective actor within the constituency. The necessity for supporting some social movement organization may be low if an established interest group can be relied upon to protect group interests, or if a rival social movement organization is more viable. NAACP, CORE, SNCC, SCLC, as well as a

number of others, offered various alternative courses of action to American blacks during the 1960s. Each tried to mobilize support from somewhat different subgroups within the black community and from somewhat different sources outside the black community; and they sometimes coordinated their activities. Still, to a substantial degree these collective actors were rivals. The necessity of joining with any particular collective actor is reduced by whatever increases the prospects of rival collective actors.

In sum, the necessity of some collective action is increased by events which threaten the interests of its constituents, undermine their trust in authorities, and discredit rival possibilities of collective action. Organizers try to predict when such events will happen in order to get constituents ready for them. Organizers may also try to precipitate these events, but they must act discreetly in order not to discredit themselves. Constituents are unlikely to appreciate the organizer who deliberately creates threats to their interests to get them to mobilize. Discrediting rivals may undermine the chances of forming a useful coalition; and destroying trust in authorities can have delicate consequences for bargaining with them. Regardless of who precipitates these events, when they happen organizers try to point out the necessity for collective action. It should be one of the empirical tasks of research from the resource mobilization perspective to identify what strategies in what situations best raise constituents' consciousness of this necessity, if not the necessity itself.

2. Opportunity

What kind of events raise the chances that constituents can realize their interests through collective action? As with necessity, there are

multiple sources of opportunity. First, a collective actor may create its own opportunities by establishing its credibility and effectiveness in the eyes of the constituency. Opportunity is created when a given collective actor convinces members of its constituency that its proposed collective action is viable and can produce some results. Potential participants want to know whether the actor who proposes collective action should be taken seriously as an instrument, whether it is a potentially efficacious organization. The calculus the person makes is whether the collective actor is serious, honorable, dedicated, tough, determined, wise, or whatever else is deemed necessary for success in producing the collective good.

Low collective efficacy is a central problem in efforts to organize the oppressed, and those in the business of doing this have many suggestions to offer on dealing with it. The basic strategy is to demonstrate influence by picking a target that offers promise of a quick success, thus showing potential constituents that the social movement actor is one to be reckoned with and that opportunities exist for collective action. "The organizer knows," Alinsky writes (1971, page 113):
". . . that his biggest job is to give the people the feeling they can do something."

How does one accomplish this? The O.M. Collective tells us that "It is desirable to make the first organized project of the group a short term one that has a high probability of success," that "Your first issue should be an attainable goal which will provide you with your first victory," and "Try to keep tangible, though perhaps small, victories coming as well as continuous action and progress on longer-term work" (1971, pp. 4, 15, 16). Ross (1973), advising us in how to conduct Naderite citizen

action groups, remarks that "The initial projects should be small, specific, and achievable." Kopkind (1977, page 28) describes the strategy of the Fair Share organization in Massachusetts:

Following good neighborhood organizing strategy, Fair Share concentrated on small victories at the local level: tax abasements in Dorchester, bridge repairs in East Boston, a dump relocation in Worcester. Those issues did what organizing is supposed to do: engage people in work that teaches them something about power, about struggle, about leadership . . . The actions were picked to be winnable "by the most powerless people, . . . in the most militant fashion," one Fair Share worker said.

Building the credibility of the collective actor is only one aspect of increasing opportunity. Disarray in the target of collective action can dramatically increase chances for successful collective action. Sometimes external events -- a war or economic crisis -- will leave a target of collective action in an especially vulnerable state. Sometimes internal conflict will become so acute that the possibilities of effective counter action against the collective actor become greatly diminished.

Trotsky describes such a situation as one of the "political premises of a revolution":

The ruling classes, as a result of their practically manifested incapacity to get the country out of its blind alley, lose faith in themselves; the old parties fall to pieces, a bitter struggle of groups and cliques prevails; hopes are placed in miracles or miracle workers (1959, page 311).

Finally, opportunity may be raised by the actions of coalition partners and third party supporters. When others plan actions or lend support to a collective actor, new possibilities for collective action may become available through the aggregation of resources involved. Lipsky (1970) and Schattschneider (1960) have been particularly attentive to this aspect of opportunity.

In sum, the opportunity for collective action is increased by events that raise the credibility of the collective actor, throw its antagonists into disarray, and make available coalition partners and third party support. As with necessity, organizers attempt to anticipate such events so that they are prepared to take advantage of them. They may also attempt to precipitate them, a less delicate matter than precipitating increases in necessity. Increasing opportunity does not require the same discretion. Regardless of who or what precipitates the events, organizers try to point out increased opportunities for collective action. It should be one of the empirical tasks of research from the resource mobilization perspective to identify what strategies in what situations raise constituents' consciousness of opportunities for collective action as well as the opportunities themselves.

Loyalty and Responsibility

In the Appendix to this paper, we suggest how the variables discussed combine to produce mobilization for collective action. Two different mechanisms operate, one acting through people's loyalty to a group with which they experience solidarity, and the other acting through people's responsibility to personal principles which are at stake in collective action.

When group interest, solidarity, and urgency combine, we may talk

about people as being activated by loyalty. When personal interest in collective goods, especially those we have called principles, combines with urgency, we may talk about a person as being activated by responsibility. Note that urgency is a part of both combinations. We argue that the call on either loyalty or responsibility is greater when the urgency of collective action is increased.

It is useful to think of loyalty and responsibility not merely as attributes of individuals but as properties of cultural codes or belief systems. Individuals exist in a climate with cultural beliefs about one's obligations to those groups with which one identifies and the responsibility to contribute one's share to just causes. Some individuals will have internalized these beliefs more than others, and the content and strength of these beliefs may differ by culture and sub-culture. Nevertheless, we expect considerations of loyalty and responsibility to be important, because there are certain central components in loyalty and responsibility codes that are widely shared, regardless of the political principles, ethical beliefs, or religion on which they are based. These include an expectation that people will contribute some share when groups with whose fate they are linked have a big stake in collective action and that they will contribute some share to see that the principles they hold dear are realized.

The demands of loyalty and the demands of responsibility happily coincide much of the time. However, they may on occasion diverge. The hallmark of loyalist behavior, as Hirschman (1970) notes, is the commitment to participate in a group in spite of disagreement with it. Loyalty becomes manifest and distinguishable from responsibility when the two promote opposite tugs -- when people feel that their principles conflict

with the group's interest as it defines it. Such principled opposition may, of course, claim to represent the group's "true" interest in resisting the call to honor the group's discipline.

Self-Interest Revisited

In this final section of the paper, we return to a consideration of the individual costs and benefits which affect constituents' propensity to join in collective action. We do not suggest that actors ignore what they have to gain and lose individually when deciding whether to support collective action. Such considerations are important, sometimes decisive, but in ways that tend to be obscured by utilitarian logic and the conceptual imagery of economics. Some of these ways are even awkward to discuss in the language of "goods" and "costs," but we try to do so in order to confront the utilitarian argument more directly.

In any constituency, the cost of collective action per actor may be reduced over time by a number of historical forces. If, for example, the constituency is a social class and the collective good is control of the state, the cost per constituent of the good goes down as the number of actors in the class increases, their control of strategic resources increases, their access to support from outside parties increases, the repressive power of authorities declines, and so forth. McCarthy and Zald (1973) point out how the mobilization of social movement organizations in America has been facilitated by increases in the income and discretionary time of people in many constituencies, and by increases in the size of a liberal conscience constituency with particularly high levels of income and discretionary time. Clearly, the cost to a constituent of giving \$50 and fifty hours is more when he or she earns \$5,000 a year working forty

fixed hours each week, than when he or she earns \$25,000 a year with much discretion on when and how much to work.

Regardless of changes in the income and occupational structure of the constituency, and the political economy of its environment, joining in collective action still involves significant costs. Good organizers do their best to reduce them. Sanctioning potential constituents -- providing selective incentives -- is only one way to reduce or offset costs. First, we consider some of the other ways of reducing costs. Next, we consider how the effectiveness of many selective incentives provided by social movement organizers is primarily dependent upon constituents' solidarity, their principles, and the viability of collective action. And, finally, we delimit the situations in which the concept "selective incentives" seems most appropriate to characterize important determinants of social movement mobilization.

Reducing Costs without Selective Incentives

1. Entrepreneurs, inventors, and engineers strive, often successfully, to reduce the cost of producing various economic goods and services. Likewise, a foremost task of organizers is to search for more efficient ways of bringing about the collective good. If they succeed, they reduce the amount that constituents must contribute. By distilling their own experiences, learning from others' experiences, and developing theoretical understanding of their historical situation, organizers can assess opportunities and perhaps discover ways of creating opportunities. Many activists spend much time planning and arranging so that it will be less costly for constituents to pool resources, attend meetings, demonstrate, petition, and otherwise participate.

2. When organizers provide constituents with goods and services,

these are often collective goods rather than selective incentives. A number of antiwar groups, for example, provided draft counseling. Feminist organizations have provided free medical services, crisis centers, and community centers. When carried far enough, the more collective goods an organization provides, the fewer individual goods constituents need. An expensive strategy of providing individuals with some specific benefit in exchange for their participation may be supplanted by a cheaper strategy of providing goods that all can enjoy. If some potential constituents ride free, others get acquainted and linked with the movement.

3. Through struggle, social movements may succeed in forcing authorities to bring about collective goods that reduce the costs of participation. When a protest movement succeeds in forcing the repeal of repressive legislation, it reduces future costs to participants. When unions succeeded in reducing the work week, they increased the discretionary time of their constituents; when unions succeeded in raising wages, they increased the discretionary income of their constituents. These struggles reduced the subsequent cost of contributing time and money to the union.

Selective Incentives Dependent upon Consciousness and Solidarity

1. When a potential constituent views a social movement and sees something in it for him, it is often something he expects to receive (or avoid) in the future only if the movement succeeds. A peasant gives his support to revolutionaries in the hope of being rewarded after the revolution, only if he expects there to be a revolution. If bringing about the collective good will put the movement in a position to reward its friends, then consciousness raising inevitably provides selective incentives, and the latter are an uninteresting explanation of mobilization. But the con-

victions that "History is on our side," and "Victory is inevitable," rarely attract opportunists until the opposition is visibly crumbling. During the early stages of many social movements, when mobilization is most problematic and interesting, distant promises of selective incentives are easily discounted. Some theorists have suggested that the anticipated gain of future individual goods is what motivates many organizers of collective-good-providing outfits (see Frolich, Oppenheimer, and Young, 1971). While there may be quite a few such political Elmer Gantrys, it is hard to believe that they play a decisive role in most social movements.

2. While some selective incentives depend on a consciousness of the movement's opportunities, others depend on a consciousness of the movement's worth. If social movements provide constituents with valued friends, esteem, status, insignia, posters, red books, or brown shirts, they facilitate mobilization primarily to the extent that constituents share principles that the movement defends. As we have already noted, social clubs and fraternal orders can generally provide "social incentives" at less cost, since they don't bear the burden of providing collective goods. And even when a social movement organization is the best fraternal order on the market (or when a fraternal order becomes a social movement organization) the problematic aspect of mobilization is raising the consciousness that the continued value of the "social incentives" ultimately depends upon. It is relatively easy for a social movement to provide opportunities for people to make friends or display insignia. If this were what it takes to mobilize, mobilization would be less difficult an enterprise.

3. In some communities, scab workers would run the risk of being ostracized, despised, and spat upon. These are very real social incen-

tives. Perhaps they would also run the risk of losing access to various informal mutual aid services which carry material benefits. And maybe they would run the risk of getting beaten up. By utilitarian logic, they wouldn't scab. But, insofar as these selective incentives are dished out spontaneously by informally organized members of the community, the interesting question for students of mobilization is why community members sanction scabs. If the community is large, each sanction has an imperceptible effect on the outcome of the struggle. Sanctioning is less costly than the struggle, but it is part of the collective action nonetheless.

We would look for an answer to this problem along the lines suggested in the "solidarity" section of this paper. When a person's fate is bound to the fate of the group, he feels threatened when the group is threatened; and he expects others in the group to feel the same way. He is likely to support the goals of group action, but he is obliged to support the group anyway. Inspired by loyalty in other group members and offended by disloyalty, he may sanction them accordingly. And, depending on his own response to the group's call to action, he feels self-respect or shame.

Solidarity blurs the distinction between individual and collective goods. When a person's self-concept and way of life are tightly bound to a group, especially when the group is democratically organized and when the group is powerful, participants experience a control over their fate that they lack as individuals. The logic of their action is unlikely to be utilitarian.

When Does Mobilization Best Fit the Utilitarian Account?

1. When social movement organizations have the armed force it takes to tax and draft soldiers, or when they control access to crucial goods and services (e.g., jobs, patronage), they may have the capacity to maintain or extend their level of mobilization primarily by means of selective incentives. If the past enterprise which produced such power to induce or constrain is not of interest to the investigation at hand, it may be assumed.

2. Some social movement organizations mobilize enough resources from one constituency on the basis of solidarity and responsibility so that they can mobilize another constituency on the basis of self interest. Sometimes it's worthwhile to do so because the mobilization of the latter constituency is vital to success. Even in such cases, as in number one above, the amount of inducements or constraints necessary to mobilize the problem constituency should vary with its solidarity and strength of principle. It is easier to govern a sympathetic population than a hostile one.

Conclusion

The problem we address in this paper is akin to the classic problem of social order. Sociologists have long recognized that the existence of social order can't be taken for granted, that an explanation is required to account for large numbers of people going about their daily lives in coordinated fashion and, in the process, producing certain collective goods (and bads) that hold society together.

The problem of the mobilization of a potential constituency by social movement actors addresses similar issues with reference to a group.

By posing the production of social movements as the production of social order (rather than a symptom of disorder), the resource mobilization perspective breaks sharply with much past research. Yet within the resource mobilization perspective there are differing approaches to social movement mobilization that parallel differences in the approaches of past research to the origins of social order. We aren't suggesting that the mixture of coercion, shared values, and voluntary exchange that glues together any particular society is similar to the mixture that glues together any social movement; only that many of the issues raised in this paper have long been discussed outside the social movement literature.

Without evaluating utilitarian approaches to the problem of order in a society, we consider problems with utilitarian accounts of social movement mobilization. We suggest that research focus on how organizers raise consciousness of common interests, develop opportunities for collective action, and tap constituents' solidarity and principles. Systematic investigation of what works for organizers should offer promising ground for theoretical advance.

Appendix

Here we summarize some of our argument more formally. Let's assume we know the interests of an actor (A). A has an interest in getting, bringing about, or keeping each of a number of goods, services, and specific states of affairs. We array them so that the first m are the individual goods and the last n are the collective goods. Let "i" represent any of the individual goods and "j" represent any of the collective goods.

$V_a(i)$ and $V_a(j)$ represent the values to A of the i th and the j th goods, respectively. These values may be thought of as dollars, utiles, or any unit of worth that let's us compare A's interests in different goods.

Let $P_1(i)$ and $P_1(j)$ be the probabilities that A will get the i th and the j th goods, respectively, if A organizes or joins in the collective action that we are considering. $P_2(i)$ and $P_2(j)$ represent the probabilities that A will get the i th and the j th goods if A takes the best alternative course of action. The alternative may mean joining in an alternative collective action, or it may mean doing nothing in particular.

Now, insofar as utilitarian assumptions are valid, A will join in collective action if and only if:

$$\sum_{i=1}^m V_a(i)[P_1(i) - P_2(i)] + \sum_{j=m+1}^{m+n} V_a(j)[P_1(j) - P_2(j)] > 0$$

Unless A is especially resourceful or any of the collective goods are especially easy to come by, it should be clear that for each j :

$$P_1(j) \approx P_2(j)$$

Therefore: $\sum_j V_a(j)[P_1(j) - P_2(j)] \approx 0$

And A will join in collective action if and only if:

$$\sum_i V_a(i) [P_1(i) - P_2(i)] > 0$$

So if A is any ordinary actor (resourceful actors are treated separately below), A's interests in collective goods drop out of the model. For any j, neither $V_a(j)$ nor $P_1(j)$ nor $P_2(j)$ nor any relations among them are relevant to A's propensity to join in collective action (except insofar as they affect $\sum_i V_a(i) [P_1(i) - P_2(i)]$).

We may also drop from consideration all individual goods for which $P_1(i) = P_2(i)$, namely all the individual goods that A is just as likely to get regardless of whether or not he joins in collective action. The remaining individual goods include the contribution to collective action,⁷ any inducements, any constraints, and any opportunity costs.

We argue that most social movements would never get off the ground if their constituents' decisions to participate were based exclusively, or even primarily, upon individual self-interest. Social movements are often facilitated by the solidarity of a group of actors sharing common interests. Rapid mobilization of social movements is often precipitated by conspicuous threats to common interests

and by conspicuous opportunities for common interests to be defended by collective action. Self-interest is only one basis for mobilization. To state this formally we introduce several terms that weren't needed in presenting the utilitarian model.

Let S stand for how much A is linked to a solidary group at risk to mobilization. (On pages 22-23 we note the kinds of relations we would count to determine A 's linkage to a solidary group.) Solidary groups have interests; they have stakes in preserving some states of affairs and in changing others. Let $V_g(j)$ be the interest the group has in the j th collective good. For the sake of the discussion here, the strengths of a group's various interests may be treated as though they are measurable in comparable units.

$P_3(j)$ stand for the probability the group will get (or preserve) the j th collective good even if the collective action under consideration does not happen. Perhaps authorities will bring about the collective good anyway, or perhaps it will be brought about by some alternative collective action. Recall that for each ordinary actor $P_1(j) = P_2(j)$, and they amount to the probability that the j th good will somehow be brought about. Subtracting $P_3(j)$ from this probability, we can let $P_2(j) - P_3(j)$ represent the "urgency" of the collective action -- the difference that the collective action makes to the chances of getting the collective good. (Some of the factors which affect the urgency of collective action are discussed above, pg. 32-38.) Now the group's stake in collective action can be represented by:

$$\sum_j V_g(j)[P_2(j) - P_3(j)].$$

Combining the group's stake in collective action with the actor's stake in the group, we suggest that $\sum_j V_g(j)[P_2(j) - P_3(j)]S$ represents an important basis for collective action. The higher the value of this expression for the actors in a group at risk to mobilization, the more solidarity and loyalty impel them to join in collective action. This is so even if free riding could reap for them all the benefits of collective action without risking penalties.

Until now we have assumed that only one group is the locus of solidarity for any actor. But sometimes actors have various important ties to several groups which may differ in their interests. Let g stand for any of G relevant groups, and let S_g stand for A's linkage to g . Now we can let $\sum_{g=1}^G \sum_j V_g(j)[P_2(j) - P_3(j)]S_g$ represent the combined effects upon A's propensity to join in collective action of A's stakes in these groups and these groups' stakes in collective action. The more the different groups to which A is vitally linked share common interests in threatened collective goods, the more loyalty impels A to join in collective action. But if the groups have conflicting interests in the collective goods, A's propensity to join in collective action is attenuated.

So far we have presented two bases for mobilization among ordinary actors: first, pursuit of individual self-interest, and second, solidarity with a group in the pursuit of group interests. Now we present a third basis. The general idea is that actors may feel a responsibility to contribute their share to collective action insofar as it stands a chance of bringing about something they value. The terms needed to express this more formally have already been introduced. $V_a(j)$ represents A's interest in the j th collective good. $P_2(j) - P_3(j)$ represents the difference that collective action makes to the chances the j th good will come about. We

suggest that the higher $\sum_j V_a(j)[P_2(j) - P_3(j)]$ is for A, an ordinary actor, the greater is A's propensity to join in collective action.

The expression above represents the expected value of what A would gain from free riding. We are simply suggesting that the more worthwhile the ride is to A, the more likely A is to contribute a share of the costs.

For the most part a person's interest in a collective good ($V_a(j)$) is broadly constrained by his interests in individual goods ($\sum_i V_a(i)$) and by the interest of his solidary group(s) in the collective good ($V_g(j)$). So in many struggles this third basis of collective action reinforces the other two presented above. But in constituencies with strong ethical codes, there are actors who may join in collective action that breaks with all their past solidary groups and involves personal sacrifices. The two nonutilitarian bases for mobilization are especially likely to work in tandem in many situations because both depend in part upon $[P_2(j) - P_3(j)]$ -- i.e. the difference collective action is likely to make to the provision of the collective good. Our point here is that this third basis for mobilization is distinct from the other two, although it may often supplement them.

Now we put together the terms discussed so far, and model the propensity of the ordinary actors in a solidary group to join in collective action. (Resourceful actors will be added to the model later.) For the sake of argument, we assume that the terms in the model -- the interests, the probabilities of realizing them, and the group affiliations -- all may be estimated for the actors in a solidary group, at a time when some organizers or organizations are trying to mobilize the group for collective action. Initially, our dependent variable is whether or not an actor joins in collective action. The model is:

$$Y = b_0 + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3$$

where

$$X_1 = \sum_i V_a(i) [P_1(i) - P_2(i)]$$

$$X_2 = \sum_g \sum_j V_g(j) [P_2(j) - P_3(j)] S_g$$

$$X_3 = \sum_j V_a(j) [P_2(j) - P_3(j)]$$

All of the terms have already been defined, but we define them again here for convenience:

$V_a(i)$ and $V_a(j)$ are the values to the actor of the i th and j th goods, respectively;

$V_g(j)$ is the value of the j th collective good to the g th group

S_g is the degree of linkage that the actor has to the g th group;

$P_1(i)$ and $P_1(j)$ are the probabilities that the actor will receive the i th and j th goods respectively, if he organizes or joins in collective action;

$P_2(i)$ and $P_2(j)$ are the probabilities that the actor will receive the i th and j th goods respectively if he takes some alternative course of action (for example, does nothing);

and $P_3(j)$ is the probability that the actor will receive the j th good if the collective action in question does not occur.

The model suggests some relationships among what we consider to be key determinants of actors' propensities to join in collective action. Such a model can help make sense of various strategies by which organizers try to mobilize various constituencies. And it enables us to state more precisely our disagreements with the utilitarian logic of collective action.

It makes sense to think of "self interest" when interpreting b_1 , "loyalty" when interpreting b_2 , and "responsibility" when interpreting b_3 .

By utilitarian logic, b_1 should be substantial but the other parameters (and the error) should be trivial. In other words, only changes in X_1 should affect the actors' propensity to mobilize. In contrast, we think that b_2 and b_3 differ in interesting ways according to the constituency and the historical epoch, but they are often quite substantial. Our expectations about b_1 do not differ from utilitarian expectations; but we believe that it is often more difficult for organizers to raise X_1 than it is for them to raise the other variables. Even though b_2 may be much lower than b_1 in some constituency, organizers may find that the most efficient use of what resources they have is to work on the X_2 rather than the X_1 of their constituents.

The argument becomes stronger when we use an aggregated version of the model to consider mobilization over time. Let Y be the proportion of the constituency mobilized at each point in time; and let the X 's estimate average levels of the relevant interests, probabilities, and solidarities, within the constituency at each point in time. We expect that when variance in X_1 is decisive to mobilization, it is usually brought about by historical forces, conjunctures of events, or agents of repression; social movement organizers usually lack the kind of resources it takes to sanction constituents with selective incentives.

Over time, the most volatile term in the model is $P_2(j) - P_3(j)$, a component of both X_2 and X_3 . Recall that this term represents the 'urgency' of collective action--the difference collective action is likely to make in the chances that the collective good will be gained (or protected). The collective action under consideration is not very urgent when authorities or rival collective actors are likely to provide the collective good anyway, when constituents aren't mobilized enough for the collective action to seem possible, and when the target is relatively invulnerable to the collective

action. But $P_2(j) - P_3(j)$ may rise suddenly with events bringing sharp changes in the availability of coalition partners, in the policies and capabilities of enemies and rivals, and in the number of constituents who are already mobilized.

The consequences of the latter are key to mobilization's volatility. If constituents' propensity to mobilize is affected by the extent to which they are already mobilized, then mobilization and demobilization feed upon themselves. Not only does mobilization at one point in time affect mobilization at the next, but at each point in time actors' decisions depend upon their estimation of each others' current and future decisions. Constituents estimate each others intentions through processes that are neither scheming nor irrational, neither 'strategic interaction' nor 'circular reaction'. Among actors who share solidary relations (see pg. 22-23), interaction can be cooperative, sensible, and principled, at least as much so as circumstances permit. Here is the point at which organizers can often intervene most efficiently. Even if they can't provide selective incentives, organizers may be able to coordinate communication and decision-making, pool the resources that constituents are ready to contribute, and offer a plan of action. Demonstrating to constituents that they share a readiness to mobilize and that they have a mobilizing agent, increases their propensity to mobilize.

But when do organizers and prior organizations commit themselves to mobilizing other actors for collective action? So far our model only deals with ordinary actors. We now expand it to include "resourceful" ones as well.

A "resourceful actor" is defined to be any actor (A) for whom $P_1(j) - P_2(j)$ is noticeably greater than zero, for some collective good (j) at stake in collective action. When they contribute, resourceful actors noticeably increase the expected value of what is to be gained by collective action. Unlike ordinary actors, they get less worthwhile a ride if they decide to ride for free.

We agree with utilitarian logic that it makes a difference to A whether A makes a difference to the outcome of collective action. We think this is so regardless of whether the basis for the given mobilization is self-interest, responsibility, or loyalty. So we expand the model to include X_4 and X_5 where $X_4 = \sum_g \sum_j V_g(j)[P_1(j) - P_2(j)]S_g$ and $X_5 = \sum_j V_a(j)[P_1(j) - P_2(j)]$. By definition $X_4 = X_5 = 0$ for ordinary actors. The expanded model, thus, looks like this:

$$Y = b_0 + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + b_5X_5$$

where all terms are as defined earlier.

How should the two new parameters be interpreted? If it makes sense to interpret b_1 as self-interest and b_3 as responsibility, then the interpretation of b_5 is inherently ambiguous. The higher X_5 is, the more A has to gain from contributing; and so self-interest impels A to contribute. At the same time, it is frequently included in responsibility codes that those who can make a difference have a special responsibility to contribute. So self-interest and responsibility may coincide, dictating the same response to any change in X_5 .

To untangle this ambiguity in the interpretation of b_5 in any particular study, we would have to consider the nature of the resourceful actor's stake in the relevant collective goods. Following Olson and other utilitarians (in order to confront them more directly) we do not limit the worth of a collective good to its material worth. For the purposes of

this discussion, we allow actors to have a strong interest in a collective good (like the liberation of distant people) from which they may gain no concrete benefits. If "altruistic" interests are awkward in utilitarian analysis -- and we think they are -- it is particularly awkward to call it self-interest when altruistic interests are pursued by resourceful actors who may be sacrificing valuable individual goods. On the other hand, when we call it "responsibility" we should keep in mind that regardless of whether material interests are at stake, what is a collective good to one group is very often a collective bad to another; and it may be awkward to apply the term "responsible" to action we oppose. After all, social movements often find that most actors resourceful enough to contribute substantially to their mobilization are responsible to their antagonists.

The interpretation of b_4 as loyalty rather than self-interest makes sense insofar as $V_a(j)$ differs from $V_g(j)$ for the resourceful actors in the constituency, and insofar as S accounts for some of the variance in X_4 . (Otherwise X_4 reduces to X_5 and there are more ambiguities.) Generally, b_5 should be smaller than b_3 , and b_4 should be smaller than b_2 . While all free riding may be irresponsible and disloyal in some situations, free riding is worse on both counts when the withheld contribution noticeably damages the prospects of realizing common interests. (Depending upon the units of $V_g(j)$, b_2 and b_4 may shrink with group size. Loyalty dictates that you help the group, but the bigger the group, the less of the group's total needs must come from you.)

When the cases we consider are either actors in a solidary group, or time points in the history of a solidary group, we take the b 's as fixed for the solidary group (as assumed in the model). But if we con-

sider a number of groups in several societies and epochs, we may assume the b's to be variables. Then it would be interesting to ask how and when self-interest, responsibility, and loyalty are institutionalized as bases of mobilization for collective action.

Footnotes

¹We are grateful for comments on an earlier draft of this paper from Ronald Aminzade, Carol Connel, Myra Marx Feree, Anne Locksley, M.J. Maynes, John McCarthy, Mancur Olson, Michael Polen, Steven Rytine, Jan Smith, and Charles Tilly.

²Others have expressed similar skepticism about the arguments that we question here. We found James Q. Wilson's Political Organizations (1973) especially helpful, although Wilson is less focused on social movement actors than we are. K. Wilson and Orum (1976) and Wernette (1977) more specifically address political mobilization by social movement actors with an argument similar to this paper. See also Gamson (1975, chapter five) for a discussion of some of the arguments developed more completely here.

³Free riders may be especially demoralizing when the goals of collective action are "exclusive collective goods." The latter, unlike "inclusive collective goods," are worth less to each constituent the larger the constituency. When the actors in the construction industry pressure the government to encourage construction, they seek an exclusive collective good -- the more actors in the industry, the less each actor gains from whatever collective action achieves. On the other hand, those who seek clean air or an end to war are not in this situation. When the goals of collective action are "exclusive" in this sense, free riders can be seen not only as failing to contribute their share but also as reducing the worth to participants of whatever collective action may gain.

⁴White (1976) explores this version of the selective incentive argument and points out that, under such a definition of selective incentives, "Olson is correct in asserting that people do not act on their interests unless they gain a private benefit" (p. 271). But she correctly recognizes that such a tautological solution deprives the idea of any explanatory value. Heath (1976) also has a very helpful discussion of the tautology problem in social exchange theory more generally.

⁵We rely here on the distinction made in Gamson (1968) between inducements and constraints, which operate on the situation of the actor, and persuasion, which operates on the orientation of the actor. For a fuller discussion of the distinction, see pp. 73-81.

⁶Our discussion of interests is quite similar to and influenced by Tilly (1978).

⁷The contribution generally consists of time and effort, money, or perhaps some other source. Some readers may find this representation of the utilitarian model clearer if the contribution is taken out of the expression that sums the expected value of the individual goods, and added to the right side of the inequality. To do this, let the contribution be the last individual good in the array of A's goods- the mth good. Then we can assume the utilitarian actor (A) will contribute and continue to contribute as long as:

$$\sum_{i=1}^{m-1} V_a(i) [P_1(i) - P_2(i)] > V_a(m).$$

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