

Unit 5 Social Moment Presentation Script

Slide 1

Hello everyone and welcome to the presentation on social movements. The purpose of this presentation is to help us gain further insight into exactly what a social movement is and how this applies to the social movements of the nineteen sixties.

Slide 2

A social movement is an organized group that acts consciously to promote or resist change through collective action. Social movements consist of large numbers of people, who, through, deliberate and sustained efforts, organize to promote or resist social change.

At the heart of social movements lies a sense of injustice. Because social movements have not become institutionalized and are outside of the political main stream, at least at first, they offer outsiders an opportunity to have their voices heard. Social movements are likely to develop in industrialized societies than in pre industrial societies where acceptance of traditional beliefs and practices make such movements unlikely.

Slide 3

There are two broad types of social movements. There are proactive social movements. These social movements promote social change. And then we have reactive social movements. These are social movements that resist social change.

Slide 4

Sociologist David Aberle classified social movements into four broad categories and then two smaller ones. You may pause this presentation if you wish to look over the list on this slide. In the following slides, we will discuss each of these categories.

Slide 5

The first two categories of social movements, alterative and redemptive target individuals. Alterative social movements seek to alter some type of behavior. An example is the Women's Christian Temperance Union in the early 1900's that sought to get individuals to stop drinking alcohol.

Redemptive social movements seek a total change. An example is fundamentalist Christianity that aims to create a new person who is wholly committed to the teachings of Christ. The Civil Rights Movements could be considered a redemptive social movement as well.

Slide 6

The second two types of social movements, reformative and transformative target society. Reformative social movements seek to reform some specific aspect of society. An example is the environmental movement that seeks to reform the way that society treats the environment.

Transformative social movements seek to transform the social order itself, replacing one type of society with another. The American, French, Russian, and Cuban Revolutions, for example, all sought and achieved such a transformation.

Slide 7

Another type of social movement is referred to as the Millenarian movement. This is a transformative social movement that is based on prophecies of coming calamity.

Slide 8

Finally, we have transnational social movements. These are social movements with a global orientation. Their emphasis is on changing some specific condition throughout the world. The women's movement, labor movement, environmental movement, and animal rights movement, for example, have expanded beyond national boundaries and are now world-wide, working to change specific social policies and individual behaviors in many societies.

Slide 9

As we have seen, social movements are fed by a sense of injustice. They stem from widespread, deeply felt discontent, the conviction that some condition of society is no longer tolerable. However, not everyone that feels dissatisfied with a social issue joins a social movement. Why do some join but not others? Sociologists have found that recruitment generally follows channels of social networks. That is, people most commonly join a social movement because they have friends and acquaintances already in them.

Slide 10

Let's look at three explanations for why people join social movements.

To explain why people are attracted to social movements, sociologist, William Kornhauser proposed mass society theory. Kornhauser argued that many people feel isolated because they live in a mass society, an impersonal, industrialized, highly bureaucratized society. Social movements fill this void by offering a sense of belonging.

A second explanation to account for why people join social movements is because they feel deprived of something. According to this theory, people feel deprived whether it be of money, justice, status or privilege join social movements with the hope of redressing their grievances. This theory may seem so obvious as to need no evidence. Don't the thousands of African Americans who participated in the civil rights movement of the 50s and 60s and the world war I soldiers who marched on Washington after Congress refused their promised bonuses provide ample evidence that this theory is true? Deprivation theory does provide a starting point.

As sociologist James Jasper and Dorothy Nelkin point out we will miss the basic reason for people's involvement in social movements, if we overlook the moral issue. People getting upset about the injustice that others experience and wanting to do something about it. Some people join because of moral shock. This is a sense of outrage in finding what is really going on. For people who view a social movement in moral terms. Great issues hang in the balance. They feel they must choose sides and do what they can to help right wrongs.

Slide 11

Sociologists have identified 5 stages in the growth and maturity of social movements. First we have initial unrest and agitation. During this first stage, people are upset about some condition in society and want to change it. Leaders emerge who verbalize people's feelings and crystallize issues. Most social movements

fail at this stage. Unable to gain enough support after a brief flurry of activity, they quietly die.

Second we have resource mobilization. A crucial factor that enables social movements to make it past the first stage is resource mobilization. By this term, sociologists mean the gathering and organizing of resources such as time, money, information, people skills, and the ability to get the attention of the mass media. Those resources may include access to churches to organize protests. A key resource is communications technology such as cell phones, internet sites and blogs. Also important is access to mailing lists, faxing, and e mailing.

Third we have organization. A division of labor is set up. Leadership makes policy decisions and the rank and file carry out the daily tasks necessary to keep the movement going. There is still much collective excitement about the issue, the movement's focal point of concern.

Fourth we have institutionalization. At this stage the movement has developed a bureaucracy. Control lies in the hands of career officers who may care more about their position in the organization than the movement for which the organization's initial leaders made sacrifices. The collective excitement diminishes.

Finally, we have organizational decline and possible resurgence. During this stage, managing the day to day affairs of the organization dominates the leadership. A change in public sentiment may have occurred and there may no longer be a group of committed people who share a common cause.

Slide 12

Social movements brought about extensive social change. The women's movement for example has led not only to new laws, but also to a different way of thinking about relations between women and men. Most social movements, however, are not successful. Let's look at the reasons for their success or failure. To succeed, a social movement must appeal to broad constituencies by focusing on wide spread concerns which generally are embedded deeply in society and resists change. Therefore, most social movements fail. Some that do succeed, however, such as the Civil Right movement and the women's movement become powerful forces for social change. Some key elements that will attribute to the success or failure include their core members, the number of committed members, the potential effects of the movement tactics on outsiders, and the group's relationship to authorities.

Slide 13

One of the key elements in the success or failure of a social movement is its ability to make use of the mass media. The leaders of social movements try to manipulate the mass media in order to influence public opinion. A key to understanding social movements is propaganda. That is the presentation of information in the attempt to influence people. Sociologists, Alfred and Elizabeth Lee, identified seven basic techniques of propaganda.

First is name calling. This arouses the opposition to the competition by associating it with a negative image.

Second we have glittering generality. This is arousing support for one's own position by associating it with a positive image.

Third we have transfer. Transfer is associating one's own opinion with something the public respects or approves, or associating the competition with the public disapproves.

Next we have testimonials. Having famous or admired people endorse one's own product, candidate, or policy.

Next we have plain folks. This is associating the product, candidate, or policy with just plain folks.

Next we have card stacking. Presenting only positive information about what one supports and only negative information about what one opposes.

And finally we have bandwagon. Emphasizing how many others buy the product or support the candidate or policy to get people to join in.

In choosing which social movements to cover and how to frame coverage of those movements, the mass media play a crucial role in determining the potential success or failure of any social movement. So, the mass media then become the gatekeepers to social movements. If those who control and work in the mass media are sympathetic to a cause, it will receive sympathetic treatment. If the social movement goes against their own views, the movement will likely be ignored or receive unfavorable treatment.

Slide 14

As we have seen, social movements may be an important source of social change. In the process of bringing about change, most movements initially develop innovative ways to get their ideas across to decision makers and the public. Some have been successful in achieving their goals. Others have not. As historian, Robert A. Goldberg has suggested, gains made by social movements may be fragile, acceptance brief, and benefits minimal and easily lost. For this reason, many groups focus on preserving their gains while simultaneously fighting for those they believe they still desire. This concludes our presentation on social movements. If you have any questions, please contact your instructor.