

REVISING THE RESOURCE MOBILIZATION THEORY: A REEXAMINATION
OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Wei-Der Shu, Department of Sociology, Syracuse University¹

ABSTRACT: To proponents of the resource mobilization theory in the sociological field of social movements, there exist three basic assumptions relevant to social movements—rationality based on the utilitarian logic, the significance of resources, and the critical role played by external sponsors. After examining the empirical evidence relating to the civil rights movement provided by Piven and Cloward, I re-evaluate the validity of these assumptions and suggest some modification of the resource mobilization theory: (1) adoption of both rationality and normative orientation as the basic assumption of movement participation; (2) introduction of the concept of precondition, including political opportunity structure and cultural climate structure; (3) distinction between material resources and nonmaterial resources; (4) emphasis on indigenous organizations; (5) consideration of the role of accident in the formation of movements.

INTRODUCTION

In the United States, the 1960s saw a level of social movements activity unparalleled since the depression decade of the 1930s. African Americans, students, women, farm workers, and a variety of other groups struggled to effect basic changes in the political and economic structure as well as to develop around the issues of civil rights, women's rights, peace, and anti-war. Of the wide-ranging effects that the social movements of the 1960s had on sociology, one of the more significant was the renewed orientation in the study of social movements. Traditionally the classical theorists of social movements (e.g., Park, 1967; Le Bon, 1952; Blumer, 1955; Turner & Killian, 1986; Kornhauser, 1959) focused on the sudden increases in "individual grievances" generated by the "structural strains" of rapid social change. The proponents of the classical model also shared the assumptions that movement participation was relatively rare, discontents were transitory, movement and institutionalized actions were sharply distinct, and movement actors were arational if not outright irrational.²

Before the upsurge of activism in the 1960s, the American public, even the social scientists, seemed quiescent. The United States was supposed to have become a middle-class, affluent society. The movements of the decade dramatically challenged not only the public interpretations of American society and social movements, but also the assumptions adopted by these classical theorists of social movements. According to Zald (1992: 331), the events of the 1960s provided a catalyst for social movement theory in several

ways. On the one hand, issues of power, conflict, and the variable distribution of political resources came to the center stage of social movement theory. On the other hand, since many social scientists sided with the activities and were debating issues of strategy and tactics, the irrational assumption of the classical approach seemed outmoded.

In the late 1960s, a number of scholars began to critique the earlier classical theories and converged on what has become the resource mobilization theory (e.g., Olson, 1965; Gamson, 1968; Oberschall, 1973; McCarthy & Zald, 1973). The new perspective provided by the resource mobilization theorists emphasized the continuities between movement and institutionalized actions, the rationality of movement actors, the strategic problems confronted by movements, and the role of movements as agencies for social change.

That is to say, we usually take for granted the intense relationship between the empirical studies of the civil rights movement in the 1960s and the formulations of the resource mobilization theory. In this paper, I would examine the idea that resource mobilization theory, being a synthetic product of the empirical studies of the civil rights movement, is the best model to explain the dynamic of the civil rights movement. In the first section, I briefly review the empirical data of the civil rights movement provided by Piven and Cloward (1979). Then, I explore the basic assumptions of the resource mobilization theory and analyze the validity of these assumptions through examining the empirical data. Finally, I complement the resource mobilization theory by significant insight from other theories of social movements and reconstruct a new synthetic model to catch the reality of the civil rights movement.

THE PIVEN AND CLOWARD THESIS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

In this section, I rearrange the Piven and Cloward thesis (1979) of the civil rights movement by dividing the development of the movement into four phases --- pre-movement phase, movement emergence phase, movement maintenance phase, and movement decline phase.³

Pre-Movement Phase

According to the Piven and Cloward thesis (1979:184), no group in American society has been as subject to the extremes of economic exploitation as blacks. Each change in their relationship to the economic system has mainly represented a

shift from one form of extreme economic subjugation to another : from slaves to cash tenants and sharecroppers; from cash tenants and sharecroppers to the lowest stratum in the emerging southern rural free labor system; and, finally, to the status of an urban proletariat characterized by low wages and high unemployment. But, under the severe control of caste arrangement by the dominating whites, the blacks had no opportunity to resist the subordination. What were the mechanisms of maintaining the caste system in the southern states?

On the one hand, the ideology of racism played a crucial role in the forming process of the caste system. As Piven and Cloward (1979:189) said, "defiance was largely precluded by the socializing structures of southern society — its educational system, its religious institutions, its media, and a culture in which symbols of white supremacy were the hallmark."

On the other hand, the coalition among the southern ruling bloc (including the big landowners, the industrialists, the bankers, the merchants and the state and local governments), southern white working class, northern corporate business, and the national government was also strong enough to reinforce the caste arrangement. The complex interconnection of the coalition needs to be analyzed more comprehensively. First, by excluding blacks as proletariat, the southern manufacturing class "made the underpaid white worker satisfied with his 'superior' status" and "threatened implicitly to bring in the Negro in case of 'difficulties' with the white workers (Piven and Cloward, 1979:191)." Second, northern corporate business with big investments in the southern region had shared the political control with the southern ruling bloc (Piven and Cloward, 1979:188). Finally, the alliance of the national government and southern state and local governments represented the shared interest of exploiting the blacks.

As for the concrete example of the severe caste arrangement, the lynch mob could be seen as the hallmark of the white violence against the blacks and the attempt of the whites to maintain the white supremacy (Piven and Cloward, 1979:186).

Movement Emergence Phase

After World War II, as economic modernization thrust the blacks out of one socioeconomic system into another, their capacity to resist caste controls was substantially enlarged. The crucial movements of the emergence phase included the 1955 Montgomery Boycott and the 1960 Greensboro Sit-In Movement. The mechanisms of the transformation include the ghettoization caused by migration and urbanization, the broad support for civil rights demands among the northern whites, the intervention of the federal government, and the possible coalition between white and black proletariat and unemployed.

First, the mass migration from the rural agricultural region in the South to the urban industrial region in the North appeared because of the economic modernization during the period. Then, together with the urbanization, the migration resulted in ghettoization in the urban communities. The ghettoization

produced concentration and separation. Consequently, behind the walls of segregated isolation, the blacks were better able to build resistance to subordination (Piven and Cloward, 1979:203). Concentration and separation also generated a black economic base consisting of clergymen, small entrepreneurs, professionals, and labor leaders which formed the emergence of an independent black leadership sector (Piven and Cloward, 1979:204).

Second, northern whites basically supported the black civil rights demands. The reason was that the most insistent black demands were for political rights in the South and that was no threat to the northern white working class. The huge white middle class gave its support more readily, because it was largely insulated from blacks as a result of suburbanization and of its privileged occupational position (Piven and Cloward, 1979:239).

Third, with the rise of communism the United States was thrown into intense competition for world domination, a circumstance that demanded an ideology of "democracy" and "freedom" (Piven and Cloward, 1979:193). The intervention of the federal government could be explained by the changing foundation of the ideology. Furthermore, the increasing influence of the black voters in the electoral system was another factor affecting the process of policymaking.

In sum, the indigenous strength, the political opportunities, and the support from outside groups indeed all together provided the vehicles for the blacks to forge solidarity, to define common goals, and to mobilize collective action. I would analyze the two important milestones of the emergence phase separately — the 1955 Montgomery Boycott and the 1960 Greensboro Sit-In Movement.

The most dramatic early protest occurred in Montgomery, Alabama. On Thursday, December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a seamstress in a local department store, refused to sit in the section of a bus restricted to blacks and was arrested under local segregation ordinances. As word of the arrest spread, a remarkably instantaneous mobilization of the black leadership took place, spurred by the heads of the Women's Political Council. They called for a boycott of the public bus system the following Monday morning through the distribution of 40,000 leaflets (Piven and Cloward, 1979:209).

On Monday morning, only four days after the arrest, the boycott was nearly 100 percent effective. In the afternoon, Martin Luther King, a newcomer to the community and thus a figure still not marred by faction identification, was elected to head a permanent boycott committee, the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) (Piven and Cloward, 1979:209).

The Montgomery struggle attracted attention throughout the country and the world. Money poured in from the NAACP, from the United Automobile Workers (which had a substantial black membership), and from thousands of individuals, especially in the North. Finally, the U.S. Supreme Court declared Alabama's state and local bus segregation laws unconstitutional (Piven and Cloward, 1979:210-1). The black movement of the post-World War II

period had staged its first major battle and won its first major victory.

Four years later, on February 1, 1960, four students from the Negro Agricultural and Technical College in Greensboro, North Carolina, entered a variety store and were refused service at the lunch counter where they sat in violation of the caste rules. Fueled by "the discrepancy between the promise of desegregation and the reality of tokenism," the sit-in movement swept like a brush fire from one locale to another (Piven and Cloward, 1979:221).

The spread of the movement to Atlanta was of special significance,⁴ for after a series of organizational meetings following the Montgomery boycott, King formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and located its offices in Atlanta. In April, with SCLC aid, student delegates from dozens of universities assembled at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina, to form the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) (Piven and Cloward, 1979:222).

Movement Maintenance Phase

After the establishment of the SCLC and SNCC in 1960, the form and strategy of the civil rights movement changed to some degree and the movement had begun to enter the maintenance phase. The creation of SNCC and SCLC marks a new phase in the civil rights movement for two main reasons. On the one hand, the organization brought a new generation of student activists into the developing movement. On the other hand, it shifted the strategic focus of the movement from the defensive orientation of the bus boycotts to a more offensive direct action. The milestone of the phase was the 1963 Birmingham Confrontation.

Different from the previous movements in which some "accidents"⁵ were the immediate catalysts, the 1963 Birmingham Confrontation, through the created tension between the people and the police, was deliberately and consciously planned to draw the battle line with the Kennedy Administration. The reason for selecting Birmingham was that the SCLC leadership believed that a campaign in Birmingham would provoke and expose southern racism and extremism as no other campaign had (Piven and Cloward, 1979:241).

Lunch counter sit-ins, selective boycotts, demonstration, and "expected" arrests were the strategies used by the movement participants. More than 3,000 people had been imprisoned and the jails, both regular facilities and improved ones, were filled. Finally, an agreement between the federal government and the state government was reached that provided for the desegregation of lunch counters, rest rooms, and drinking fountains, for less racist hiring and promotion practice in local business, and for the immediate release of 3,000 imprisoned demonstrators (Piven and Cloward, 1979:241-3).

Movement Decline Phase

The efforts of the federal government were focused on convincing all the black movements to emphasize electoral rights. The Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965 and the

Voting Rights Act of 1967 could be seen as the results of these efforts. The extension of the franchise and the guarantees of federal enforcement of the right to vote held out the promise that blacks could finally make substantial progress toward full equality through regular electoral processes. As a result the movement lost legitimacy (Piven and Cloward, 1979:253-4).

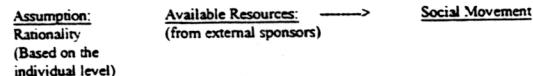
Another reason for movement decline was the disintegration of the movement. Within the economic and political transformations under way, the coalition of groups comprising the southern civil rights movement began to fragment. In most accounts of the period the fragmenting was attributed to divisions within the movement, especially to the growing frustration and militancy of the younger members in SNCC and Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) (Piven and Cloward, 1979:252).

In sum, to some extent we could conclude that while the successful struggle for political modernization in the South was completed, the civil rights movement lacked the legitimate goal for mobilizing the necessary resources to form the collective action.

THE VALIDITY OF RESOURCE MOBILIZATION THEORY

After the flowering of mass mobilization in the 1960s, the scholars of social movements, while considering the explanation of the generation of social movements, shifted their focus from the "grievances" in a society to the availability of "resources and opportunities" for collective action. To the scholars of this new emerging resource mobilization theory (e.g., Oberschall, 1973, 1993; Tilly, 1978; McCarthy and Zald, 1973; Zald and McCarthy, 1979, 1987; Gamson, 1975), the available resources and mobilization process are considered more important than grievances in triggering social movement formation. Although McAdam (1982) distinguishes between those aspects of resource mobilization theory that focus on internal resources and those that focus on political opportunities, I discuss the two at the same time.⁶ Despite the diversities among the resource mobilization theorists, it seems there are some shared key tenets in the resource mobilization theory (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Resource Mobilization Theory



First, the resource mobilization theory is based on the assumption that the costs and benefits of participation play an important role in the analysis of mobilization process. This assumption of rationality leans heavily on Olson's (1965) logic of collective action. He takes a utilitarian model of behavior in a market economy and applies it to collective action in general:

.....the rational individual in a socio-political context will not be willing to make any sacrifices to achieve the objectives he shares with others. (1965: 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. (1965: 151)

Since the success of social movements will benefit all members of a social category, no matter whether an individual participates in collective action or not, Olson argues that rational individuals will not participate. Therefore, to Olson, only under two conditions, i.e., the provision of selective incentives to increase the rewards of those engaging in collective action, and the sanction on nonparticipants for their failure to participate, could participation of collective action nevertheless be expected. In other words, the resource mobilization theorists accept that the utilitarian assumption and the conceptual imagery of economics are most useful when relevant interests are given, concrete, and selfish.

Second, resource mobilization theorists emphasize the "available resources" necessary for the initiation and development of movements. As for the definition of resources, Oberschall (1973: 28) describes resources as "anything from material resources — jobs, income, savings, and the right to material goods and services — to nonmaterial resources — authority, moral commitment, trust, friendship, skills, habits of industry, and so on." Furthermore, for McCarthy and Zald (1977: 1220), resources "can include legitimacy, money, facilities, and labor." Jenkins and Perrow (1977) argue the critical connection between resources and the emergence of social movements. "Giving rise to insurgency, is the amount of social resources available to unorganized but aggrieved groups, making it possible to launch an organized demand for change (Jenkins and Perrow, 1977:266)."

Finally, one version of the theory (e.g. McCarthy and Zald, 1973, 1977; Zald and McCarthy, 1979; Jenkins and Perrow, 1977) says that dominated groups rarely possess the skills and resources needed for social protest and are unable to organize and sustain movements by themselves unless they receive assistance from "outside elite." For instance, McCarthy and Zald (1973) seek to explain the full flowering of protest activity in the 1960s largely on the basis of an increase in available funding opportunities on the part of external support groups.

To what degree does the analysis of the civil rights movement provided by Piven and Cloward (1979) fit the assumption and prediction of the resource mobilization theorists? Is there any limitation of the resource mobilization theorists' assumption and prediction? In this section, I will examine the relationships between the empirical data and the resource mobilization theorists' prediction of the civil rights movement.

The Assumption of Rationality

Building on Olson's (1965) concept of selective incentives, proponents of resource mobilization theory argue that risk-

reward considerations, or cost-benefit calculations, are central to understanding the movement participation. Basically, the tactics and strategies which were effectively used in the civil rights movement fit the implication of "rationality" proposed by these theorists. For instance, in the 1963 Birmingham confrontation, the strategy of choosing that city as the demonstration site was based on the consideration that a campaign in Birmingham would provoke southern racism and extremism, and the conflict would attract the national media attention and reveal the legitimacy of adopting non-violent action in the movement.

Even though the principle of "cost-benefit calculations" is applicable in the civil rights movement, it seems that the utilitarian logic, which applies the risk-reward considerations *on the individual level only*, is problematic and questionable, especially considering that the fundamental question is why individuals do participate in the movements. In terms of the 1963 Birmingham confrontation, some activities in the movement involved high risk and self-sacrifice. Many participants in the confrontation were beaten, or even arrested. Of course, from the perspective of the goal-achievement of movement itself, the strategy of radicalization could be described as the product of cost-benefit calculations. However, from the perspective of the movement participants themselves, the strategy of self-sacrifice could not be treated as the outcome of risk-reward considerations. Of course, I recognize that the goal-achievement of the movement would benefit the participants themselves to some degree, since most of the participants were black, who could be described as "beneficiaries" according to McCarthy and Zald's (1977: 1221) definition.⁷ But I would argue that the accomplishment of the "abstract" goal of the movement is not less important than the gain of "concrete" reward of participants in the case of 1963 Birmingham Confrontation.

It is inevitable for us to raise the following question: if we acknowledge that those participants sacrificed themselves for the achievement of collective goals, how could we explain the mechanism of their involvement in the movement? As a matter of fact, the assumption of rationality in social movement participation has increasingly been recognized as a problem, even to the researchers who see themselves as working within the resource mobilization theory. Various solutions have been suggested to the problem. For instance, Oberschall (1993: Ch. 3) argues that, given the multiplicative relationship between the *value* of the collective goal and its possible realization, for some people the goal is so valuable that even a slight chance of success is enough to motivate participation. Fireman and Gamson (1979) assert that the two main reasons for participation are *loyalty* to the larger collectivity engaged in collective action, and the felt *obligation* to participate in order to maintain one's self-respect.

To resolve the problem of rationality in movement participation, I would introduce a very common concept — normative orientation. I define "normative orientation" as the psychological processes related to the achievements of the collective goals. The reason why those participants took part in the civil rights movement is that they gained some kind of psychological satisfaction over and beyond any visible benefits produced by the organization. While considering the

significance of normative orientation in explaining individual participation in movements, we could conclude that the resource mobilization theorists' assumption of rationality is limited and incomplete.

The Importance of Available Resources

Basically, the resource mobilization theorists' prediction of the crucial role played by available resources fits the empirical data. In the civil rights movement, together with urbanization, ghettoization of the black population during the first half of the twentieth century created the conditions that generated the resources needed to support a sustained movement against racial domination. It is obvious that the "black economic base" (including clergymen, small entrepreneurs, professionals, and labor leaders) resulting from concentration and segregation really played an important role in the forming process of the movement (Piven and Cloward, 1979: 204).

In addition to the "infrastructure resources," the nonmaterial resources like legitimacy also played a significant role in the formation of movement. Legitimacy like "equal rights between the white and the black" which resulted from the "actual unequal distribution of resources" really launched the people to become involved in the civil rights movement. The importance of legitimacy is obvious while comparing the movement emergence (and maintenance) phases and the movement decline phase. The infrastructure resources like organizations, leaders, or communication networks in the movement decline phase were not less, and were perhaps more, than during the movement emergence and maintenance phases. But the movement declined because of the lack of legitimacy during the period. Since the movement goal of "equal rights" was compromised and the movement was absorbed into the electoral system, the civil rights movement could not find a new issue (and new goal) and faced the fate of decline.

We could raise a very interesting question: to what degree do the nonmaterial resources like legitimacy share the same property with material resources like organizations, leaderships, and communication networks? Of course, I could posit both the material resources and nonmaterial resources into the same category (e.g., resources) like Oberschall (1973) and McCarthy and Zald (1977). But I would argue that the intrinsic property of nonmaterial resources are different from material resources. For instance, in the 1963 Birmingham confrontation, the strategy of choosing that city led the anticipated conflict between movement participants and southern racism and local government. The cost was the imprisonment of more than 3,000 movement participants, including leaders and cadres. In other words, the material resources such as leadership, labor, and communication networks were exhausted dramatically in the confrontation. On the other hand, the legitimacy of the movement was facilitated at the cost of material resources during the period of local-government repression. In sum, both processes of increasing the legitimacy and decreasing the material resources emerged together.

If we classify legitimacy and material resources into the same category of resources as resource mobilization theorists do, we will probably face the contradictory directions of the same concept "resources."

The Importance of External Sponsors

The resource mobilization theorists' position about the heavy weight of the role played by "external sponsors" is not appropriate. Of course, the outside support from Northern white liberals, the federal government, courts, mass media, philanthropic foundations, and white college students were important in the movement. But we can not neglect the scope or the capacity of the movement's indigenous base.⁸

The empirical data demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of local movements were indigenously organized and financed. Furthermore, it is clear that in almost every civil rights confrontation we could find the establishment of indigenous organizations first (for example, the Montgomery Improvement Association in the 1955 Montgomery Boycott), followed by the response of outside elite from the Northern white liberals, the federal government, court, and so forth. The point here is that to some degree the outside supports could be seen as an "inevitable" or "forced" response to the indigenous organization, since the external sponsors did not prefer any great redistribution of political power and other resources. That is to say, in the movement emergence phase, the resources mobilized by the indigenous base are much more important than the resources from the outside elite. The outside sponsors are usually critical after the establishment of movement organizations, i.e., in the movement maintenance phase.

COMPLEMENTING THE RESOURCE MOBILIZATION THEORY BY OTHER INSIGHTS

Does the resource mobilization model cover the domains of the civil rights movement thoroughly? Does the resource mobilization model describe the formation of the civil rights movement completely? Since the resource mobilization theory has confronted the aforementioned problems and limitations, the way of resolving the problems is to complement the resource mobilization theory with significant insights from other theories of social movement.⁹ In this section, I will introduce three factors neglected by the resource mobilization theorists — political opportunity structures, cultural climate structures, and accident.

Political Opportunity Structure

The social and political contexts in which social movements operate affect movement strategies as well as their prospects for influencing policy. Social movements are most likely to emerge under political and social conditions that support (or at least which do not completely suppress) mobilization and where their capacity for political influence through established political actors is favorable. In one sense, to the proponents of resource mobilization theory, the argument that resources are important in the formation of movements is incomplete to some degree. The key question is not only whether the dominated groups possess enough resources, but

also what the origins of the resources are. Compared with the resource mobilization theory, the political process theory (e.g., McAdam, 1982)¹⁰ provides some insights about the origins of resources by the concept of "political opportunity structure."

The concept of political opportunity structure refers to the set of environmental constraints and opportunities that "encourage or discourage [collective action] and lead it toward certain forms rather than others" (Tarrow, 1988: 429). To McAdam, "any event or broad social process that serves to undermine the calculations or assumptions on which the political establishment is structured occasions a shift in political opportunities." Moreover, "among the events and processes likely to prove disruptive of the political status quo are wars, industrialization, international political realignments, prolonged unemployment, and widespread demographic changes" (1982: 41).

The "political opportunity structure," like urbanization, migration, and economic modernization, played an important role in the formation of the civil rights movement. Based on this concept, we could know more about the causes of the formation of the "black economic base" (Piven and Cloward, 1979: 204) which led to the emergence of available resources for the movement.

Cultural Climate Structure

Although the concept of "political opportunity structure" provides us with some insights about the origins of available resources, I think the elements of the concept (e.g., wars, industrialization, international political realignments, and so forth) are still incomplete. The most serious limitation of the concept is the neglect of the role played by ideology or cultural climate which is related to the "calculations or assumptions on which the political establishment is structured" (McAdam, 1982: 41).¹¹ According to Boudon and Bourriau (1989: 208), the term ideology (or cultural climate) is used to describe a system of values, or more usually beliefs, which deals with some particular aspect of the political and social organization, of societies, or, more generally, of their destiny. In this sense, ideology or cultural climate is a particular kind of "structure of opportunities" which is also related to the gain of available resources, especially nonmaterial resources like legitimacy.¹²

For example, the emergence of the civil rights movement could be explained by the fundamental changes of cultural climate structure. In the pre-movement phase, the ideology of racism played a critical role and most people took the racial discrimination for granted. In the movement emergence phase, with the rise of communism, the United States was thrown into intense competition for world domination, a circumstance that demanded ideologies like "democracy" and "freedom" (Piven and Cloward, 1979: 193). Meanwhile, Blacks began to recognize the possibility of changing discrimination by their own struggle. The changes of ideological content from racism to freedom made a shift in the legitimacy of asking for equal rights between the white and the black.

Accident

Since we could see the available resources necessary for movement emergence as a continuum, the resource mobilization theorists fail to decide the critical point of the amount of necessary resources to start a movement. In other words, how could we explain the emergence of a movement during a specific period, rather than another? The proponents of resource mobilization theory don't provide us any insight about the question.

It is clear that the empirical data of the civil rights movement reveals the nature of movement as response to an "unusual situation" or an "unexpected accident," especially at the beginning point of the emergence phase. For instance, the "unexpected arrest" in the 1955 Montgomery Boycott and the "refused service" in the 1960 Greensboro Sit-In Movement were the immediate catalysts of the movement.¹³

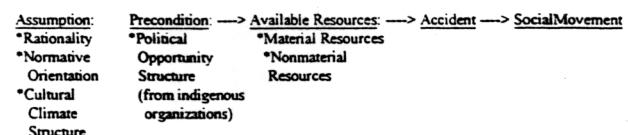
That is to say, it is possible for a social movement to emerge only under the condition that both "available resources" and "accidents" would appear. It is difficult for a social movement to emerge under the situation that only "available resources" or "accidents" exist.

CONCLUSION — REVISING THE RESOURCE MOBILIZATION THEORY

As a matter of fact, the above comparison between empirical data and the resource mobilization theory reveals both the advantages and limitations of the resource mobilization theory. Furthermore, the other factors neglected by the resource mobilization theorists also provide a possibility of remodifying the resource mobilization thesis. In this section, based on the aforementioned discoveries, I will revise the resource mobilization theory (see Figure 2).

There are four major differences between the original resource mobilization theory and the revised resource mobilization theory. First, I adopt both the rationality and normative orientation as the basic assumption of social movements. Second, I introduce the concept of "precondition" in the revised model, including both the political opportunity structure and cultural climate structure. Third, in terms of the concept of available resources, I make the distinction between "nonmaterial resources" and "material resources." Also, I think the resources from indigenous organizations are much important than the resources from external sponsors. Finally, I think "accidents" are very critical catalysts in the formation of movements.

Figure 2. Revised Resource Mobilization Theory



First, I basically accept the assumption of rationality proposed by the resource mobilization theorists. However, based on the argument that the "unit of analysis involving

"calculations" includes both the levels of individual participants and collective goals, I propose the mechanism of linking participants and organizations together is composed of not only one dimension, i.e., the cost-benefit calculations of individual participants, as claimed by the resource mobilization theorists. Rather, the normative orientation could be seen as another kind of mechanism integrating participants and organizations.

Then, the original resource mobilization theorists don't provide any insight about the origin or precondition of available resources. I believe the concept of "precondition" is helpful in explaining the dynamics of the flow of resources. Also, the concept of "political opportunity structure" (e.g., McAdam, 1982) is limited by the neglect of the dimension of ideology. To some degree, the ideology is an independent fact different from the political opportunities like wars, industrialization, or urbanization.

I also argue that the resource mobilization theorists' concept of available resources is confused because it is composed of elements with different intrinsic properties, i.e., material resources and nonmaterial resources. The empirical data demonstrates the contradictory tendencies of material resources and legitimacy in the same event. It is necessary to distinguish the two different elements of the same concept "resources." Furthermore, the empirical data suggests that we should pay more attention to the important role played by the indigenous organizations than the external sponsors.

Finally, even though other critical conditions like "precondition" and "resources" have existed, it is difficult for a movement to emerge without the appearance of "accidents" as an immediate catalyst.

In sum, I would recognize the resource mobilization theory as an ideal framework to explain the dynamics of the civil rights movement, although we need to elaborate some concepts and complement it by the insights from other theories of social movements. The paper suggests that to construct a more appropriate model of social movements, we should use the existing theoretical models as a base and remodify them through the discoveries of grounded empirical studies.

NOTES

1. I would like to thank Dr. Richard G. Braungart for his advice regarding my study of collective behavior and political sociology. I am also grateful to Dr. Louis Kriesberg, Dr. Richard Ratcliff, and Dr. Marwan Khawaja for their enlightenment on my exploration of social conflict theory and social movement theory. Finally, I appreciate Dr. Richard Ratcliff and two anonymous *Maxwell Review* reviewers' comment about the early draft of this paper. However, responsibility for the contents of this paper resides with the author.

2. McAdam (1982: 6-10) classified these classical theories into six models: mass society, collective behavior, status inconsistency, rising expectations, relative deprivation, and Davies' J-curve theory of revolution. It is notable that there is no claim that these models are interchangeable, even though

there exists little intellectual conflict among the proponents of these models.

3. One of the more comprehensive theses about the stages of social movements in general is that of Mauss (1975: 61-6) who identifies five stages through which they move: (1) incipiency, (2) coalescence, (3) institutionalization, (4) fragmentation, and (5) demise. In terms of the development of the civil rights movement, McAdam (1982:4) discussed the development of black insurgency according to the following four periods --- the historical context (from 1876 to 1954), the period of movement emergence (from 1955 to 1960), the heyday period (from 1961 to 1965), and the complex period of movement decline (from 1966 to 1970). Basically, I follow McAdam's framework of the development of the civil rights movement and divide it into four stages. The reason for combining the stage of fragmentation and the stage of demise together and labeling it as "movement decline phase" is due to the difficulties of distinguishing these two according to my limited empirical data.

4. In one article, "The 1960 Sit-Ins: Protest Diffusion and Movement Take-Off," Oberschall (1993: Ch. 8) clearly describes the process of the protest diffusion initiated by the 1960 Greensboro sit-in, and sees the specific event as "movement take-off."

5. For instance, the 1955 Montgomery Boycott was provoked by the "unexpected" arrest of Rosa Parks, and the 1960 Greensboro Sit-In Movement was caused by the refused service of the four black students. Of course, it is arguable whether or not these catalyst were "accidents." Maybe those people involved in the events were conscious and intensive. In terms of the case of Rosa Parks, on the one hand, this act by her was "spontaneous," in that she was angered by the attitude of a particular bus driver who had ordered her removed from a bus several years before. On the other hand, the act reflected a long period of preparation, since Parks was the secretary of the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991: 125). But, even though those people acted consciously, the actions were planned by any social movement organization. To some degree, the classification between emergence phase and maintenance phase was based on the dimension — to what extent the movement was led by some kinds of "uncontrolled" accidents from the viewpoint of the movement participants.

6. Perrow (1979) also adopts the strategy of seeing these two as different "versions" of resource mobilization theory (RM), rather than seeing them as different "theories." Perrow (1979) terms the approach of McCarthy and Zald (1977) as RM I, while labeling the approach of Oberschall (1973), Tilly (1978), and Gamson (1975) as RM II. However, McAdam (1982) refers the latter as a "political process model," a different model from the resource mobilization theory.

7. To McCarthy and Zald (1977: 1221), it is useful to distinguish actors related to social movements along the dimension where the actors will *benefit directly* or not from the accomplishment of the goals of social movement organizations (SMOs). Those who would benefit directly from the SMO goal accomplishment we shall call "potential beneficiaries." Those direct supporters of a SMO who do not stand to benefit directly from the SMO goal accomplishment we shall call "conscious constituents."

8. In his important research regarding the civil rights movement, Morris (1984) also asserts the critical role played

by the indigenous groups of the dominated in the formation of social movements. He even labels his approach of studying social movements as "indigenous approach."

9. There are different positions regarding the possibility of integrating various social movement theories. On the one hand, Eyerman and Jamison argue that there exists "incommensurability" between the pragmatic resource mobilization approach and other approaches of social movement study, namely, the more historically informed particularists (i.e., Alain Touraine's approach). They assert that "a mere combination of approaches would lead to a loss of the particular contributions that each approach has provided to the understanding of social movements (1991: 27)." On the other hand, both Cohen (1985) and Shu (1994) call for the development of a synthetic approach by which social movements could be analyzed as both instrumental and expressive, as both resource mobilizer and meaning generators. I would argue that a synthesis model of social movements not only remains attractive at the level of theory, but also enhances our understanding about the complicated reality regarding the social movements.

10. As mentioned above, political process theory could be seen as a variation of the "standard version" of resource mobilization theory.

11. For the purpose of sorting out the specific ways in which various types of opportunities shape movements, Smith (1995) also suggests the importance of desegregating the concept of political opportunity structures into the cultural, social, and political contexts. For her, the political context defines movements' "strategic opportunities," while the cultural and social contexts of movement opportunity structures define movements' "mobilizing opportunities." Even though I don't agree with her terminology of labeling the cultural context as one kind of mobilizing opportunity and naming the political context as strategic opportunity, I appreciate her distinction between political context and cultural context. To me, it leads to confusion to adopt one concept (i.e., political opportunity structure) to combine cultural context and political context together.

12. In recent years, to some extent spurred by the discussion of the "new social movements" and by the general turn toward cultural analysis in the social sciences, students of social movements have begun to explore the relationship between culture and social movements. Topics like conceptions of culture in social movement analysis, cultural processes in mobilization, and cultural analysis of social movements gradually emerge in this new orientation. For recent publication on these topics, refer to Johnston and Klandermans (1995), Eyerman and Jamison (1991), and McAdam (1994). This kind of literature could be seen as the evidence asserting the significance of ideology or cultural climate in the development of social movements.

13. To some degree, the concept of "accident" could be connected with the collective behavior theory of social movements, especially the premise of "spontaneity" of collective behavior. However, the discussion of collective behavior theory is beyond the scope of this paper.

REFERENCES

Blumer, Herbert (1955) "Social Movements," Pp. 99-220 in *Principles of Sociology*, edited by A. M. Lee, New York: Barnes and Noble.

Boudon, Raymond and Francois Bourriau (1989) "Ideologies," Pp. 207-212 in *A Critical Dictionary of Sociology*, selected and translated by Peter Hamilton, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Cohen, Jean (1985) "Strategy or Identity: New Theoretical Paradigms and Contemporary Social Movements," *Social Research*, 52(4): 663-716.

Eyerman, Ron and Andrew Jamison (1991) *Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach*, University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Fireman, Bruce and William A. Gamson (1979) "Utilitarian Logic in the Resource Mobilization Perspective," Pp. 8-44, in *The Dynamics of Social Movements: Resource Mobilization, Social Control, and Tactics*, edited by Mayer N. Zald and John D. McCarthy, Cambridge, MA: Winthrop Publishers, Inc.

Gamson, William (1968) *Power and Discontent*, Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press.

_____(1975) *The Strategy of Social Protest*, Homewood, IL: Dorsey.

Heberle, Rudolph (1951) *Social Movements: An Introduction to Political Sociology*, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Jenkins, J. Craig and Charles Perrow (1977) "Insurgency of the Powerless : Frame Workers' Movements (1946 - 1972)," *American Sociological Review* 42 : 249 - 68.

Johnston, Hank and Bert Klandermans (eds.) (1995) *Social Movements and Culture*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Kornhauser, William (1959) *The Politics of Mass Society*, Glence, IL: Free Press.

Le Bon, Gustave (1952) *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, London: Ernest Benn Limited.

Mauss, Armand L. (1975) *Social Problems as Social Movements*, New York: J. B. Lippincott.

McAdam, Doug (1982) *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency 1930-1970*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

_____(1994) "Culture and Social Movements," Pp. 36-57, in *New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity*, edited by Enrique Larana, Hank Johnston, and Joseph R. Gusfield, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

McCarthy, John D. and Mayer N. Zald (1973) *The Trend of Social Movements in America: Professionalization and Resource Mobilization*, Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press.

_____(1977) "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," *American Journal of Sociology* 82(6): 1212 - 1241.

Morris, Aldon (1984) *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*, New York: The Free Press.

Oberschall, Anthony (1973) *Social Conflict and Social Movement*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

_____(1993) *Social Movements: Ideologies, Interests, and Identities*, London: Transaction Publishers.

Olson, Mancur, Jr. (1965) *The Logic of Collective Action*. Cambridge, MA : Harvard University Press.

Park, Robert, E. (1967) *On Social Control and Collective Behavior*, edited by Ralph H. Turner, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Perrow, Charles (1979) *Complex Organizations: A Critical Essay*, Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.

Piven, Frances Fox and Richard A. Cloward (1979) *Poor People's Movements : Why they Succeed, How They Fail*, New York : Vintage Books.

Shu, Wei-Der (1994) "Instrumental Strategy or Symbolic Realignment: A Rhetoric Analysis of One Document of 'Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine,'" Pp. 113-120, in *Proceeding of the 1993 Maxwell Colloquium*, edited by Ruth Charles, Syracuse, NY: The Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University.

Smith, Jackie (1995) "Transnational Political Processes and the Human Rights Movement," *Research in Social Movements, Conflict and Change*, 18: 185-219.

Snow, David A.; E. Burke Rochford Jr.; Steven K. Worden; and Robert D. Benford (1986) "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation," *American Sociological Review* 51:464-481.

Tarrow, Sidney (1988) "National Politics and Collective Action: Recent Theory and Research in Western Europe and the United States," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 14: 421-440.

Tilly, Charles (1978) *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Reading, MA: Addison Wesley.

Turner, Ralph and Lewis Killian (1986) *Collective Behavior*, 3rd ed., Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Zald, Mayer N. (1992) "Looking Backward to Look Forward: Reflection on the Past and Future of the Resource Mobilization Research Program," Pp. 326-348, in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, edited by Aldon D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Zald, Mayer N. and John D. McCarthy (eds.) (1979) *The Dynamics of Social Movements: Resource Mobilization, Social Control, and Tactics*, Cambridge, MA: Winthrop.

_____(1987) *Social Movements in an Organizational Society: Collected Essays*, Oxford, UK: Transaction Books.