Chapter 2
New (and Networked) Social Movement Literature

ABSTRACT

This chapter provides a summary of new social movement literature, with a particular focus on the phases that social movements progress through as well as the tools (namely digital) that are being used to establish diaspora (as well as social movement) networks across the international community and provide for mobilization. The chapter particularly focuses on the theories of Herbert Blumer (Life Cycle of Social Problems) and Martin Sökefeld, who writes about mobilization of various diasporic communities using social movement theory. The chapter also focuses on identity theories and the importance of developing of collective identities for effective mobilization of movement communities (diasporic and social movement).

INTRODUCTION

Hua (2011) re-introduces the concept of “dissident citizenship” that was first proposed by Sparks (1997) to note the increasing phenomenon of performing protest or dissident actions by a marginalized community to upset the political elite to make legitimate claims to egalitarian participation in the greater society. In the same manner as social movement organizations, dissident citizens use “alternative public spaces” and tactics such as protesting, demonstrations, speeches, and occupation of public spaces to make their argument for democratic inclusion. Often, these contemporary scenes of dissident citizen
activism (such as the Palestinian peoples attempting to reach the border wall separating them from Israel proper to be met with sometimes fatal violence on the part of the Israeli government) spread awareness or publicizes the inequity and often, violent opposition that non-citizens (perceived or actual) experience around the world. These actions (and reactions by the State) can elevate the plight of certain groups to regional and international awareness, and can place pressure (internal, by lawful citizens and external, by international allies) on the political establishment inflicting the discriminatory policies to reform their thinking and treatment of the Other within their borders.

In considering social movements within or among diasporic communities, often these movements are fomenting the collective power of excluded, marginalized, or oppressed populations into dissent and calls for sociopolitical change (including frequent challenges to the existing power structure). Social justice movements, such as #metoo and Black Lives Matter (which would encompass diaspora movements for recognition/human rights) are distinguished by six characteristics according to Batliwala and Brown (2006): a base of participants that are mobilized and share mutual concerns; the existence of organizations (whether formal or informal); continuity over time; a clearly articulated and defined political agenda; collective actions (demonstrations, protests, rallies) in pursuit of the movement’s goals; and the use of varied strategies and tactics. This chapter provides a brief overview of contemporary social movement and diaspora movement literature. The focus on theories of digital or networked social movements is important as well as analysis of the life cycle of social movements provides the reader with a detailed understanding as to how and why mobilization occurs.

This chapter particularly reasserts the importance of emotionality in connection with sociality in mobilization of contemporary movements that are aided by digital media and the internet. It is not enough to focus on the life cycle of a social movement without explaining the individual circumstances of each case study, which will be found in the Emergence section and the Mobilization (Coalescence) section that follows, and will place emphasis on communicative organization of participants and awareness among the community. This emphasis will be on multilateral media such as social media and argue that the often the new media feed from the bottom-up, content that comes directly from those on the ground, experiencing the movement firsthand. The multidirectional, multilateral media network allows for the presence of connected individuals as well as a protest network that brings together those individuals by emphasizing shared grievances. Both of the initial stages of social movements are crucial to the solidification of the movement as a
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