## Responses to Oppression & Conflict

**Individual & Collective**

### Individualist responses to subordination

1. Individual competitiveness: "I’ll show them": work hard, try to overcome domination as an individual
2. Religious or cultural withdrawal: rewards in spiritual, family or social life; ignore or rise above subordination
3. "Internalized oppression": blame yourself for your situation. Reject your own group, identify with dominants
4. Crime: the system is unjust, there is no point in following the rules. Take what you can get away with.
5. Anger and hostility: express hatred to oppressors, try to hurt them if possible
6. Fatalism, defeatism: there is nothing you can do, just endure your fate. Depression.
7. Substance abuse: block awareness of conditions. (Most addictive substances also suppress hunger.)

### Collective responses

- Don’t just try to operate within the system, try to change the system
- Requires a sense of “group identity” and shared interests
- Requires social or political organization among people so they can act in concert
- Usually people disagree about collective responses

### Social Organization

- Social & political organization within groups affects capacity for collective action
  - Geographic concentration/ dispersion
  - Governmental or other organization
  - Cultural/religious similarity or difference. Language.
  - Means of communication among those not in direct contact
  - Sense of shared identity, common interests is needed, cannot be assumed if people do not live together & share a common culture (and maybe not even then)

### Dimensions of Collective Action

1. Degree of challenge to dominant groups
   - accommodationist, moderate, reformist, militant, revolutionary [social banditry]
2. Integrationism vs separatism:
   - whether the minority group stresses equality and mixing with the dominant group, or
   - separation and difference (and possibly hostility)

### Degree of Challenge: Conservative/Radical Dimension

- Accommodationist = cooperating with the dominant group, accepting subordination or playing by the dominants’ rules
- Moderate/Reformist = intentionally seeking change within legal boundaries of the system
- Radical/ Militant = seeking larger changes in a confrontational, aggressive manner
- Revolutionary: seeking to overthrow the present system, by violence if necessary
- [Social banditry = “steal from the rich and give to the poor”, social crime. Disruptive, breaks rules, but does not address power structures directly]
Integrationist vs. Separatist

- Assimilationist = Minorities should adopt majority culture, blend into the larger group
- Integrationist = Races should mix, minorities should intermingle with majority, everyone should be treated the same (egalitarian)
- Separatist = Races should be separate, minorities should keep in their own groups
- Nationalist (in this context) = Minorities should have separate culture, distinct political base
- [May include inter-group hostility, aggression]

American Indian Political Responses

- 17th-19th centuries, many different responses
  - Much armed resistance
  - Much assimilation, accommodation if allowed: intermarriage, adopt "White" ways
  - Much attempt to maintain self-determination and separation
- 20th-21st centuries,
  - The "dominant" approach is forced assimilation under rhetoric of equality
  - American Indians who WANT to assimilate are generally able to do so, don't need to fight about it
  - Most American Indian politics is separatist or nationalist: emphasize cultural difference and self-determination

American Indian Movements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assimilationist/Integrationist</th>
<th>Separatist/Nationalist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>Adopt dominant culture, deny or accept inequality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reformist</td>
<td>Legal tactics to pursue equal treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical-Militant</td>
<td>Disruptive tactics to pursue equal treatment &amp; integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary</td>
<td>Violent tactics to produce new regime for all</td>
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<table>
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<th>American Indian Political Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These are never &quot;pure&quot; types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOST American Indians combine pride in being US citizen with pride in being member of a particular tribe, like other US ethnic groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A minority see themselves only as members of their tribal &quot;nation&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Links between reservations and urban areas blend integrationist and separatist impulses</td>
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<th>Two Dimensions Combined</th>
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African American Political Responses

- African Americans share most culture with European Americans, have always had both impulses in their movements
  - Assimilationist: stress common cultural heritage, desire for citizenship, share "American values."
  - Separatist: stress value of own culture, look back to homeland (Africa), stress economic development, political self-determination.
- Separatism generally stronger among African Americans when Whites are more hostile; integration and assimilation are strong when times seem hopeful
### Black Integrationists & Separatists

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<tr>
<td><strong>Accommodation</strong></td>
<td>today's &quot;Black conservatives&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reformist</strong></td>
<td>Urban League NAACP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revolutionary</strong></td>
<td>Class Revolution</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Mexican American Movements

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<th>Separatist/Nationalist</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Accommodation</strong></td>
<td>&quot;Hispanic conservatives&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reformist</strong></td>
<td>LULAC, GI Forum, MAPA, &quot;Mexican American Generation&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Radical/Militant</strong></td>
<td>MAYO, school walkouts, MEChA?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revolutionary</strong></td>
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### Asian American Movements

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<tr>
<td><strong>Accommodation</strong></td>
<td>Race-blind conservatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reformist</strong></td>
<td>Civil rights groups (e.g. JACL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Radical/Militant</strong></td>
<td>Some campus diversity groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revolutionary</strong></td>
<td>?</td>
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### Tactics, Strategy and the Interactions Between Movements and their Targets & Opponents

- What the movement does is always in interaction with the target/opponent
  - Strategy = overall plan for how chance will occur
    - Persuade power-holders to act differently
    - Change public opinion
    - Disrupt normal business, force change
    - Seize power
  - Always complex, fluid, evolving
    - Movements always use a mix of tactics, generally have multiple leaders, groups, agendas
  - Outcomes always depend on characteristics of the power-holder as well as of the movement

### A continuum of tactics

- Education, persuasion (choice of rhetoric)
- Legal politics: lobbying, lawsuits
- Demonstrations: show numbers or intensity of concern (marches, rallies, petitions)
- Economic pressure (Boycotts, selective buying)
- Confrontation, disruption, civil disobedience (Sit-ins, occupations, illegal gatherings)
- Property damage
- Violence against persons

### Interactions

- What the movement does is always in interaction with the target/opponent
  - Strategy = overall plan for how chance will occur
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**Tactics Use Power & Resources**
- Sheer numbers of people
- Military capacity: weapons, armies
- Wealth, control of land, means of production
- Environmental constraints of your home territory
- Control of means of communication
- Symbolic authority: religious, cultural, political

**Social Organization Matters**
- Social & political organization within groups affects capacity for action
  - Geographic concentration/dispersion
  - Governmental organization
  - Cultural/religious similarity or difference. Language.
- Relations to third parties who may favor one side or the other

**Education, persuasion**
- Give people information, make appeals to commonly-held beliefs, values (framing and rhetoric)
- Strategic use of language: choose how to say things in ways that will lead others to agree
- Depends upon being permitted to communicate
  - 1950s, advocating homosexual rights was defined as illegal violation of obscenity laws & advocating Communism was violation of sedition laws
  - Politically repressive regimes may prohibit any public opposition
- Need cooperation of mass media corporations to communicate to larger public

**Responses to persuasive strategies**
- Intense repression: prohibit speech entirely, drive it underground
  - Strong block to mobilization if you cannot even discuss an issue except with trusted intimates
  - May create hidden movements invisible to majority
- Free speech conditions: not overtly repressed. Responses in general order:
  - Ignore (+ standard disinformation)
  - Ridicule, trivialization
  - Rebuttal, debate
  - Adopt successful movement rhetoric, repackage to make your points in a new way

**Examples of rhetorical adaptation**
- Mid-1960s, White racists abandon attempts to publicly justify White domination & segregation; employers abandon attempts to justify employment discrimination
  - "state's rights" OLD Rhetoric
  - "reverse discrimination" OR "preferences" OR "traditional way of life"
  - Quoting Martin Luther King, Jr. against affirmative action
- Religious opponents of pornography adopt feminist arguments about violence against women; some abortion opponents adopt similar rhetoric

**Petitions, lobbying, court cases**
- Stay within the legal bounds of the state
- Democratic, legal institutions are a product of past struggles, have not always been available; product of franchise + court system
- Adapt to specific political/legal environments
- May include “behind the scenes” lobbying for particular bills (e.g. disability rights) OR professional legal strategies (e.g. civil rights)
- All ethnic minorities in US have used legal tactics.
**Constraints, interactions for legal strategies**
- Ability to use these strategies depends upon social location & available laws/institutions
- Opponents generally can use them too
- Most commonly successful when the movement has some elite backing (splits in elites) OR there is pressure from disruption or electoral strength
- Court cases require legal training, legal standing: tend to reinforce professionalization in movements
- Lobbying is most effective by full-time lobbyists.

**Demonstrative & Economic Tactics**
- Marches, rallies, vigils
  - Power of numbers, "demonstrate" your support
  - Willingness to be in the street, visible
  - Evolved with franchise & democratic elections
- Hunger strikes, immolation & other symbolic extreme actions
  - Willingness to incur sacrifice takes on a moral standing
  - Cultural understandings essential
- Boycotts & selective buying
  - Refuse to buy (use service): demonstrate economic power.
  - A coercive strategy, but does not break a law

**Responses to demonstrative tactics**
- If they are illegal or disruptive, they are more threatening; present a greater potential challenge, imply the possibility of stronger resistance
- Public tactics: do they get media coverage? Try to ignore, trivialize.
- Time, place, manner restrictions: limit disruptive potential
- Boycotts: "tough it out."
  - Make secondary boycotts illegal, make it illegal to advocate a boycott (MLK jailed)
  - Make it illegal to organize an alternative (e.g. transportation system in Montgomery)

**Confrontational tactics**
- Goal is to disrupt without being violent
- Strike & sit-down strike: keep the employer from running the business
- Civil disobedience: disobey an unjust law, e.g. sit-in at lunch counter, freedom ride, marriage license for gays, weave textile in India
- Direct action: skirt the edge between legal & illegal. Occupy a public place, march where not permitted, rally at someone’s home. Try to cause trouble.
- Make the opponent look bad if they overreact

**The question of “violence”**
- Both strong and weak groups can use it
- Property damage: is disruptive, a direct coercive tactic
  - Often the weapon of the frustrated, disempowered
  - However US history has many cases of White majority destroying the property & community of minorities
- Violence against persons
  - Traditional peasant attacks on the oppressive landlord
  - Lynching, mob violence: usually the weapon of the strong, the majority (Gamson’s research)
  - Some terrorism is the weapon of the weak

**Responses to Violence & Property Damage**
- DO often spur reforms, can be effective. But they also increase repression.
- Most often the weapon of the strong
  - Much more use of violence in the US by White supremacists than my minorities
  - Majorities are less likely to be repressed when the use violence, more likely to get away with it
- Weak groups that use violence are more likely to be violently repressed
  - A dangerous tactic is to TALK violence without the ability to back it up. “Talk loudly and carry a small stick” is a recipe for destruction.
Dynamics of Non-Violent Confrontation

- Protest ➔ Coercion ➔ Target
- Repression
- Excessive Repression or Disruption
- Audience, Outside Decision-Maker

Movement - Opponent Dynamics

- Tactics when new are disruptive, keep opposition off guard
- Over time, authorities adapt to tactics, find more effective ways of responding
- High coercion can backfire on either side.
  - Police violence (if publicized) can increase support for the protesters
  - Protester violence can decrease support for protesters
- These are highly contingent and contested and affected by underlying levels of support
- The "moderate middle" is often the audience or target

Paradoxical relations

- The more repressive the regime, the more disruptive a "mild" tactic is
  - If saying something opposed to the government is illegal, then even a pamphlet or speech is threatening
  - If regime is strong enough to repress strongly, can maintain control
- But legitimacy of regime is weak if maintained by repression
- Repressive regimes are threatened by any action
- "Soft" repression CAN be more effective: ridicule, ignore, rhetorical adaptation, small concessions

American Indian Dynamics

19th Century

- War. Indians fighting back labeled as "savages," justification for further war.
- Legal tactics brought some concessions, but dominants easily changed their mind
- Too few resources to win, the other side had too much power no matter what they did

American Indian Dynamics

Today

- Disruptive tactics mostly don't work: too small & isolated to cause trouble for the majority (but may invigorate the activists)
- A lot of conflicts are between different factions on reservations
- Symbolic struggles upset majority, gain visibility, increase in-group pride: mascots, off-reservation fishing
- Most efforts today are on the legal front: sovereignty, treaty enforcement, economic development (including casinos)

Black Civil Rights Movement

- Intense repression in the South
- Boycotts a traditional strategy
- Legal strategies & growing political influence opened up spaces
- The "drama" of civil rights: peaceful Black protest, southern White violence, federal intervention
- Belief in self-defense strong among Blacks, growing opposition to non-violence
- Riots shift the drama, coincide with shift of goals
Black Movement Analysis

- For CRM the “opponent” was the explicit segregationist regimes of the White South
- The federal government and northerners were “outside opinion” which could be influenced by the drama
- CRM resulted in greater political power, become “political insiders” in many ways
- But the problems of northern cities did not respond to these dynamics
- Increased police repression in response to riots

Doug McAdam “Tactical Innovations”

- Uses plots of the sequencing of events in the Civil Rights Movement to argue
  - New tactics explain steep rises in events
  - Dynamics of the CRM: protest first, then segregationist response, then federal response
- General argument that police eventual adapt to new tactics and their disruptive potential declines over time
- Data are from the New York Times Index

Civil Rights Events Fig 1

The “take off point

Source: Annual Index of the New York Times, 1895–1971

Doug McAdam, “Tactical Innovations,” AHR 1093

Civil Rights Events Fig 2

Sit-ins drive the 1960 spike


Doug McAdam, “Tactical Innovations,” AHR 1093

Civil Rights Events Fig 4

The plot shows that movement actions, the solid line, generally lead an action peak, followed by segregationist and government actions


Doug McAdam, “Tactical Innovations,” AHR 1093

Post-CRM protest accords: 1980s & 1990s

- General police shift from repression to intelligence & negotiation
- Try to maintain order through cooperative strategies
- Rules & regulations for protests: permits, hours
- Can avoid arrest if you follow the rules
- Protests become both more frequent and less effective