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Section on Social Movements

Editor's Introduction

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It seems to me that for some time to come most questions about social movements will continue to be studied on a case by case basis. The four articles collected in this section are excellent examples of the art of studying a case to address questions about social movements.

Thomas W. Foster's "American Culture through Amish Eyes: An Anarchist Perspective" is an examination of the living anarchist traditions of the Amish. The lineage of the contemporary Amish extends back 470 years to the Anabaptist Movement which closely followed the German Protestant Reformation. Harshly persecuted by both Protestant and Catholic state authorities, Anabaptism survived in groups that came to be known as Mennonites, Hutterites and Amish (Hostetler 1993).¹

Despite rapid population growth that outstrips land for farming and consequent serious economic dislocations, the Amish have a vital tradition. Foster shows that the persistence of Amish culture, however, is not the product of blind traditionalism. Value-rational choices repeatedly have been made by Amish individuals, families, congregations and districts about how the Amish way of life can effectively be carried on. Amish choices vary substantially at each of these levels (Kraybill 1994).² The Amish tradition has divided into radiating branches, pressed

¹The Hutterites and the Amish left Europe by quite different itineraries and with fascinating but substantially different adaptations. They are two of the more distinctive variant cultures in North America today (Hostetler and Huntington 1996; Hostetler 1993; Kraybill 1994). Both have become institutionally-complete flourishing ways of life which persist in tension and interdependence with the American mainstream.

²There is no central decision-making authority for the Amish as a whole and the *Ordnung* of Amish precepts and rules is an oral tradition rather than written scriptures (Kraybill 1994).

in varying ways against the countervailing mainstream. Foster shows that the Amish are a fertile case with which to study mechanisms of persistence in groups marginal to the mainstream.

Colleen Greer in "Ideology as Response: Culture and Political Process in the Sanctuary Movement" examines the production of ideology for this movement which resisted U.S. immigration policies in the 1980s on behalf of Central American refugees. Her review of literature shows that the significance of movement ideologies has been represented in several ways. As the first contribution of her article, Greer brings order to the discussions of movement "ideology," identifying three tendencies in among its theoretical uses.

Greer's empirical study of ideology in the sanctuary movement identifies biblical, theological and medieval-historical sources of the idea of "sanctuary" as a haven from state authority. A more cursory treatment of the sanctuary "frame" might end at that point. Greer, however, goes on to emphasize that the selection and specification of ideological concepts in the sanctuary movement depended on the concrete experiences of movement participants. What "justice," "Christian-responsibility," and "sanctuary" specifically meant was worked out by already-acting participants in a movement already underway. These defining experiences varied -- with time, with geography, with the actions of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, with relationships to refugees, and across occasionally-competing movement organizations. The broad terms of the ideology of the sanctuary movement reproduced an existing cultural frame. The ideology as it was used, however, was refined by collective responses to exigencies encountered while acting in the movement.

Robert Futrell's "Citizen-State Interaction and Technical Controversy: The U.S. Army Chemical Stockpile Disposal Program" is an analytical narrative. It traces the career of a movement from its beginning in local resistance to incineration of chemical weapons near Richmond, Kentucky, through ten years of development in which it became a national (and in some senses, international) movement. Futrell makes disciplined selection of what he describes. The lines of the narrative are established by analytical concepts: organization, political opportunity, target vulnerabilities, technical discourses, citizen-state interactions. These concepts connect with concerns in the current literature, but depend more fundamentally on a detailed examination of the case. The concepts Futrell found necessary and useful, in an important sense, are among the findings of his research.

It is more the empirical case than the literature that defines the concrete meanings of most of his central concepts. What "political opportunity" means in this narrative, for example, depends on a close analysis of the specific contexts and goals of the actions constituting the movement. I believe that this illustrates the curious point that some concepts used frequently in abstract discussions of social movements have very little meaning until they are specified in terms of a case. "Political opportunity" (to continue with the same example) identifies a truism: any social movement that exists, exists in a context with sufficient political opportunity. It is when Futrell shows us that in this case "political opportunity" takes the concrete form of access for citizen groups to the decision processes of the state that, in my opinion, it can be used to explain. "Political opportunity" (in this case) concretely is a "mandated public hearing and impact assessment process" and "state complexity and heterogeneity."

Yuichi Tamura's "The Continuity of Violence in the Stages of the *Shi-Shi* Movement of Nineteenth Century Japan" takes a carefully-selected focus on the question of whether violence is peculiar to an early or late stage of social-movement careers. This issue grows out of contrasting assertions by Blumer and Tarrow. Blumer (1939) sees violence as a characteristic of an early movement stage and Tarrow (1994) a late one. Tamura selects the *shi-shi* movement, where violence was the decisive form of action to assess these generalizations about the place of violence in social movements. Violent actions were frequent and highly consequential throughout the career of the *shi-shi* movement³ in a pattern distinctly different from that suggested by either Blumer or Tarrow.

Tamura does not dismiss the ideas of Blumer and Tarrow. Rather, I think that he enhances their usefulness when he argues that they do not hold for social movements generally. They are likely to apply to some more restricted range of movements. Blumer's identification of violence with less "organized" actions may apply in some movements and Tarrow's view of violence as a strategic adjustment to waning mass support may apply in others. Tamura documents a third pattern -- when violence predominates in actions of a social movement from beginning to end. Perhaps the conditions which select for the different patterns can be discovered.

³The *shi-shi* movement was an important precursor of the *Meiji* Restoration of 1868. The "restoration" of rule by the emperor overturned a state system (the *Tokugawa shogunate*) that had ruled Japan for over 260 years (Huber 1981). It ushered in the profound social-revolutionary transformation of Japan from feudalism to modernity.

These four studies succeed in different ways with quite different analytical problems and cases. They also share two strengths that I would like to highlight. First, they are cautious about generalizing from a single case. Instead (and more usefully!) these studies make arguments and present information which help us understand more about the range of differences that can be found among social movements. Second, they often give us a sense of the action which carries their movement forward and in a sense is the movement. They do not just point to a movement's enabling organization or culture. These studies recognize that social movements continually face the problem of putting organization and culture into action. If you agree that studies with exactly these qualities are needed to advance sociologists' understanding of social movements, the articles which follow will serve you well.

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AMERICAN CULTURE THROUGH AMISH EYES: PERSPECTIVES OF AN ANARCHIST PROTEST MOVEMENT*

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America's Old Order Amish have managed to avoid some of the most serious social problems facing the larger society. This paper identifies the countercultural and anarchistic elements of Amish society and outlines its resemblance to social movements and to other separatist/pacifist societies of the past. Also explored are Amish attitudes toward materialism, technology, art, deviant behavior and non-violent resistance and how these attitudes shape internal social behaviors as well as interactions with outsiders. Finally, brief consideration is given to the question of how the study of the Amish might inform students of the larger culture and other interested outsiders.

Introduction

America's 150,000 member Amish minority (Kraybill and Nolt 1995) has been almost uniquely successful among the nation's religious and ethnic groups in resisting change and in preserving the social integration of their small communities. Remarkably, the Amish have also managed to avoid most of the major social problems facing industrial society. Their adult crime rates are almost non-existent and their suicide rates were found to be the lowest of that of any rural-dwelling religious group in the Lancaster, Pennsylvania area (Kraybill, et. al. 1986). There is no welfare dependency in their communities because the Amish follow a tradition of "taking care of our own." The elderly are not placed in nursing homes but typically live with their children or grandchildren, usually in additions that are affixed to the houses of younger generations. The Amish do not accept public assistance or crop subsidy payments from government and they have been specifically exempted from the

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