Spring 2006

The Failure to Move: The Role of Participant Beliefs in Social Movement Success

Mimi Gentry
Western Washington University

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The Failure to Move:
the role of participant beliefs in social movement success

Mimi Gentry
Western Washington University
Honors Senior Thesis
May 31, 2006

Social movement theorists have identified three elements that greatly affect the likelihood of emergence and growth of a movement: resources, political opportunity, and participant motivations or beliefs. Of these three, resources are often held as the most important factor in the success of a movement, particularly in resource mobilization theory. This essay seeks to address and evaluate the often undervalued role of beliefs in the participant mobilization process and to refute claims that a favorable environment alone can ignite and sustain a movement regardless of participant attitudes.

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Gujarat, India, 1985. A dam is to be built on the Narmada River that will displace

85,000 people (Routledge 2003, 247). The government claims that the dam will provide

drinking water to drought-prone districts and irrigation water to distant farmers. The

government offers a relocation plan in which the predominately agricultural people of the

river valley are given small plots of infertile upland. Many of those who will be forcibly

uprooted will receive no compensation at all. Upon further research, it is discovered that

much of the irrigation water will go to sugarcane crops, recently planted by wealthy

members of the upper caste, instead of to poor subsistence farmers as promised (Sangvai

2000, 92). Many opponents also claim that much of the "drinking water" will actually go

toward industrial uses and if states decide to pipe drinking water from the newly-created

reservoir, they must do so at their own cost- an unrealistic outcome because the states

involved have "No money, no infrastructure and no idea of implementing such a plan"

(Sangvai 2000, 98). Additionally, the amount of water flowing in the Narmada was

grossly overestimated, so many of the additional benefits are unlikely to materialize. A

movement forms and letters are written. Protests staged. Lawsuits filed. Hunger strikes,

blockades, and marches are organized. Now, more than 20 years later, the dam stands,

uncompleted, at 88 meters (289 feet). All over the country large-scale development

projects are being questioned, the Narmada campaign used as an archetype for social

movements against exploitative development.

Fort McDowell, Arizona, 1968 (Welsh 1985, 150). The Bureau of Reclamation

intends to construct a dam at the confluence of the Verde and Salt Rivers in Arizona to

store surplus water and provide flood control (Espeland 1998, 112). Orme Dam is

authorized and five years later, the Yavapai Nation, a people constantly marginalized and

repeatedly relocated since 1871, is notified that their reservation is to be flooded by the project (Espeland 1998, 195). With a history of massacres and death marches in their not-so-distant past, tribal members refuse to watch their homeland, and culture, inundated. They will no longer sacrifice their civilization for the gains of others. A movement is organized and letters written. Protests staged. Lawsuits filed. Having collected an army of religious, tribal, and civil rights groups as support, tribal leaders threaten to take their case to the United Nations (Espeland 1998, 217). By 1981, the dam project is canceled (Krol 2002).

Ganges River, India. More than 400 million people rely on the river for life. It serves as not only a place for holy ceremonies, but as a source of drinking water. Yet the river is also a public sewer and a dumping ground for industrial waste; 474 billion liters of sewage, six million tons of toxic chemicals and nine thousand tons of pesticides are discharged into the Ganges each year (Lyle 2006). Waterborne diseases such as typhoid and cholera are rampant. Politicians claim to be committed, but corruption permeates the system. There is no movement here.

The question for social scientists is "why?" Why do some movements fail while others flourish? Why do movements not materialize when there appears to be severe oppression and injustice? In order for a movement to emerge, persist, and ultimately succeed, there must be a favorable environment. For the environment to be "favorable" to social movements, researchers have identified three primary factors: resources, political opportunities, and the motives of movement participants.

This paper will explore these forces, assess their relative importance and analyze the connections between them. It will reaffirm the significance of resources and political

opportunity. It will also explore the role of a true grievance, one that participants fell passionately about and where people believe substantive change is truly possible.

While all three elements are integral to a successful movement, many theorists argue the most vital of these is resources: often in the form of money, support and labor.

Resource Mobilization

Resources don't often fall into the laps of movement organizers; movement organizers and participants must actively pursue them continually throughout the struggle. Although sometimes difficult to identify, there are almost always some resources available to even the weakest movement. At the most basic level, members bring their own energy and skills, which are incredibly valuable resources. But on another level, there are often friendly restaurant owners willing to donate meeting space, or a public figure who is sympathetic to the cause. As these examples demonstrate, resources come from a wide range of sources, from minor personal involvement to large contributions. Some examples of common contributions would be favorable media coverage, elite supporters, supplies and expertise. Essentially, this category includes anything that movements can use to further their causes.

The growth of movements can be circular: access to resources increases the likelihood of success, which in turn increases participation, nurturing further success. Each potential participant has a threshold for how much hardship and risk he or she is willing to endure for the cause. Some people invest their entire lives in movements that are incredibly demanding and have little chance of success while others contribute little and get involved only when very limited risk or sacrifice is required. Each potential

member performs his or her own cost/benefit analysis and decides whether or not to join. Later, they may alter their participation or resign altogether, as costs and benefits shift (Buechler 1997, 194).

Because of this, leaders constantly strive to downplay movements' costs while highlighting the benefits, in order to bolster participation. Clearly, numbers are vital to movements because they represent legitimacy and power. Movements challenge authority, which frequently has legitimacy and always wields power and thus, movement leaders must convincingly argue that the movement speaks for "the people", and has at least as much legitimacy as the authority being challenged.

To accomplish this, movements must achieve a critical mass of participation, the scope of which is different in every situation. In the case of the Yavapai, the total population on the reservation was near 400, including youth, so their seemingly small support group of 144 adults (only one tribal member supported the dam) was a powerful consensus. The Narmada campaign, however, had over 10,000 active participants, yet the government continued to question its authority (Sangvai 2000, 50).

Internal Resources

Resources can be divided into two groups, internal and external. Internal resources are those contributed by movement members and are as varied as the participants themselves. This category includes labor, expertise, political connections, and networking with other participants, to name but a few. Obviously, the more individuals involved in a movement the more internal resources generated but large movements prove difficult in other ways. For example, it is often difficult to keep everyone organized and working together, using tactics that complement, rather than

combat each other. Large movements also tend to factionalize into smaller movements as a result of differing opinions in regards to strategies or objectives. Movement leaders must strike a fine balance between having enough members to remain credible and effective, while avoiding the destabilizing effects that often accompany large groups.

Money and organization are two additional internal resources which are highly valued (Tarrow 1996, 85). Money is obviously an important resource, but not more important than social connections among members. This is because if participants live in close proximity, or their children go to the same school, for example, movements are more likely to succeed for several reasons. Interpersonal relationships among participants add to the cohesiveness of the overall group, and facilitate order. Camaraderie and pre-existing relationships with members also provides a powerful incentive for new members to become involved. (Jenkins 1983, 538; McAdam 1997, 179). A preexisting organization also provides for communication networks among individuals (McAdam 1997, 180).

These benefits of human connection are even more pronounced if the movement is built upon a pre-existing social unit, such as tribal connections in the Yavapai Nation case study. Aldon Morris asserts that movement leaders often tap into "agency-laden" institutions, which are defined as interpersonal structures existing prior to movement formation. These can be any kind of association that provides a network for communication, personal associations, or organization. In these situations, the movement benefits greatly from existing order, cultural capital and resources (2000, 449).

<u>External resources</u>

The second resource category, termed external resources, is also thought to be important. In fact, many theorists believe external resources are essential to a movement's success. One school of thought in social movement theory, resource mobilization, holds that a movement's future, and more importantly its beginning, depends heavily upon external resources. Charles Tilly (1978) argued that grievances, or as I am referring to them, motivations, are present in all societies. Social movements, then, are sparked by some change in the external environment, resulting in a corresponding change in citizens' attitudes. The basic premise for the most extreme form of resource mobilization is that people always harbor ill feelings about one or more aspects of society and given the proper environment a movement will occur.

Craig Jenkins has put forth the argument that personal motivations for joining movements are "manufactured by the mobilizing efforts of movement entrepreneurs" (Jenkins 1983, 530). McCarthy and Zald make a similar point: "Grievances and discontent may be defined, created, and manipulated by issue entrepreneurs and organizations" (1977, 1215).

This kind of grievance fabrication was not necessary in the Narmada and Yavapai cases, however. In those instances there were tangible and well-defined grievances against which members rallied. In both cases, the motivations for the movements were not somehow latent, simply waiting for external forces or entrepreneurs to dredge them from the hearts and minds of the people; they occurred in response to public projects which posed a clear and immediate threat to those societies.

In these examples, a resource mobilization theorist might counter that while we *can* say that there was a clear grievance on which these movements were based, we

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cannot say conclusively there were no other sorts of underlying grievances that could have been amplified instead, given the proper external environment.

Were it true that other circumstances in the case studies, namely a positive shift in external resources, could have independently sparked a social movement, then resource mobilization theorists' argument would be bolstered. However, there is really no way to prove or disprove this hypothesis. In actuality, the participants involved in the Narmada movement recognized they would have no future if they were moved to the resettlement camps and the Yavapai believed they would suffer a spiritual death if they allowed their lands to be flooded.

Neither the Narmada nor Yavapai movements grew out of chronic frustrations in those social groups: clearly, they were sparked by well-defined, imminent threats to those societies. Nonetheless, I believe Jenkins and the others would counter that, in effect there is always something to mobilize against. Just because the Narmada and Yavapai grievances grew out of threatening situations does not necessarily preclude the scenario in which a positive shift in external resources (or political opportunity for that matter) might easily have generated a movement based on *some other* grievance. In order disprove this theory, one needs more than examples of "new" grievances, as is in the examples above. What is needed here is a case in which the social environment is conducive to a movement- with ample resources and opportunities in place- and no movement appears. But before exploring that possibility, it is necessary to understand the other major component of a favorable environment: political opportunity.

Political Opportunity

History has shown that the political landscape can greatly constrain or enhance the growth of social movements. Political opportunity is defined as "consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure" (Tarrow 1996, 85). Essentially, people will be more likely to pursue social change if they see a realistic prospect altering the situation, a political opportunity to do so. This opportunity can present itself in many forms. Factors such as alignment shifts, divided elites, emerging influential allies and increased access to power (as in democratic elections) all lower the cost of collective action by making it easier to effect change. Thus, these factors tend to precipitate movement action (Tarrow 1996, 86-89).

Political opportunity can sometimes be created by the movement itself. In the Narmada and Yavapai case studies, leaders attempted to do this by making the general public aware of their struggle. While they promoted their message in a variety of ways, a technique common to both was to organized marches, a proven means of attracting public attention. Marches are often used in social movements because participants already know what is expected of them and less radical supporters are willing to participate because marches remain a socially acceptable means of demonstrating. Marches also reliably attract media attention, which is a valuable external resource because media coverage is a powerful way to recruiting new members and garnering resources.

Media attention can create political opportunity as well. In the Narmada case, the march drew international attention (which movement leaders had been striving for in other ways as well; they often met with foreign leaders and kept them informed on the

situation). This coverage made it more difficult for the Indian government to repress the Narmada movement, as India had been working to the achieve status as a "first world" nation in terms of not only development, but also in areas of democracy and human rights. In order to maintain credibility in the international arena, the government was forced to deal with the movement more diplomatically than could have possibly been the case otherwise.

In the Yavapai example, the local media was controlled by a powerful family which was strongly in favor of the dam (Espeland 1998, 119). Here, the marches attracted reporting by outside media organizations which were less polarized and cast the movement in a more favorable light. And while the impact of attention from outside was perhaps less profound in this case, the added public awareness pressured politicians to seek a viable solutions to the conflict instead of sweeping it under the rug. Positive media attention can affect bystanders' opinions, which in turn affect politicians' choices, which opens up political opportunities.

Participant Motivations

The third element that greatly influences a movement's emergence, strength, and ultimate success or failure, is the individual motivations of its participants. Broadly speaking, there are two basic reasons people join movements, in effect two forms of stimulus: material and moral. Material motivations are exactly that- the participants seek to gain some personal material benefit from joining in the movement. The Narmada case is an example of this. Initially, the reason people joined the movement was because they were seeking the material benefit of a better resettlement package, primarily better land.

Later, when they recognized the government was unwilling or incapable of providing acceptable relocation packages, the movement shifted to protesting the dam itself. At that point stopping the project was seen as the only way for the people to retain the land they already had. This movement did not rise from an ethical injustice or moral imperative; participants stood to personally gain something of value.

This is not to say that participants in the Narmada movement didn't also have moral convictions. Later in the movement, leaders asserted the main reason for the struggle was to fight the oppressive Indian state. While this was clearly a moral goal, it was actually a secondary concern during much of the movement's early years, and arguably remains a secondary goal for many participants. In fact, were the government to offer adequate resettlement packages today, is likely many participants would abandon the movement despite the fact it has claimed a morally-based opposition for quite some time.

Conversely, in the case of the Yavapai, participants' motivation was largely a moral issue from the beginning. Government offers of comparable land or money were refused because, for that population, it was not about material wants, but rather the moral obligation to respect tribal history and maintain its culture.

One aspect of the Yavapai's desire to keep their land was the experience of other tribes in similar situations: in many of these cases, native cultures had gradually fallen apart after accepting cash settlements in return for land. As one tribal elder stated, "Put a dollar in one hand and the soil in another [sic], which will last longer?" (Krol 2002) This aspect of the movement could conceivably be viewed as materialistic, yet the dominant

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motivation remained moral conviction: the prioritization of tribal heritage, culture and longevity.

It could be argued that another dimension of the motivation spectrum is religious in nature. I do not include spirituality as an entity in and of itself because it seems that any spiritual motivation could be classified into the moral category, as in the case of the Yavapai, who often discussed their moral convictions in terms of their spiritual beliefs.

In order to better understand these two ends of the motivation continuum, let's look more closely at the two successful anti-dam movements referenced above.

Narmada Bachao Andolan: Material Motivation

In the 1940s, the Indian government saw their goal of industrialization in the foundations of hydroelectric dams. During the latter part of that decade, thousands of projects were planned, including 30 major hydroelectric dams on the Narmada River. One of the largest of these, the Sardar Sarovar Dam, would be located at Kevadia, a small village in the state of Gujarat. The reservoir would submerge approximately 39,000 ha of land (Turaga 2000, 239), displacing approximately 85,000 people (Routledge 2003, 247). Construction of Sardar Sarovar began in earnest in 1979 after resolving disputes over irrigation water rights between states (Baviskar 2004, 2004, 199).

The project faced little opposition until a doctoral researcher from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Medha Patkar, arrived in 1985 to study the culture of the Adivasi (the indigenous people of India) in the area. She was appalled at the plan put forth by the government for relocation of the Adivasi and other displaced groups. Patkar began organizing the citizens to demand more equitable relocation packages, a movement

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that would soon become known as Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA), or *Save the Narmada Movement.*

By 1988 it had become clear that the government had no intention of producing an acceptable relocation plan and the movement's goals shifted from amending the relocation plan to rejecting the dam project altogether (Turaga 2000, 240). The movement's new slogan, *Koi nahin hatega! Baandh nahin banega!* (No one will move! The dam will not be built!) echoed throughout the valley (Baviskar 2004, 203). Participants vowed to drown in the rising waters before moving to substandard resettlement sites. In the early 1990s, the movement staged a hunger strike demanding construction of the dam be postponed until a comprehensive review could be completed. Behind this tactic was the hope that an unfavorable report would provide a rationale for halting the dam project indefinitely.

The World Bank commissioned a feasibility study in 1992, the results of which were published in June of that same year. The report (referred to as the Morse report) identified numerous detrimental effects of the project and recommended it be canceled. The World Bank and state officials promptly dismissed the report in its entirety (McCully 1996, 304). However, after strong pressure from the international community, the support of which was actively sought by movement leaders, the World Bank withdrew its support in March of 1993 (Baviskar 2004, 204). The reversal of the World Bank's position had a much greater impact than the loss of funding. Ultimately, it signaled a lack of support, which in turn pressured other groups to withdraw their support. The World Bank withdrawal would not have been possible without pressure from foreign investors: an illustration of the importance of external resources.

Despite these setbacks, the Indian government continued with the project and as the environment changed so did the campaign against it. In the early 1990s, the Narmada movement made a second dramatic shift in its stance (the first being total opposition to the dam); leaders now expanded their cause to include any people's movement against a destructive state or corporate project that strips the poor of their livelihood (McCully 1996, 306). This new umbrella organization, called the National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM), sought to promote Indian social struggles by sharing participants and resources among affiliated movements. This tactic was not nearly as successful as the first. NAPM simply hasn't enjoyed the support seen in the anti-dam movement, perhaps because it is more difficult to motivate participants with moral claims, particularly in developing nations.

The Yavapai Nation and Orme Dam: Moral Motivation

In 1944, the same time India began looking for a means of industrial growth in the Narmada River waters, halfway across the world the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation set its sights on the Salt and Verde Rivers. The Central Arizona Project (CAP) was designed to store and regulate the flow of water, control flooding, and provide power. Orme Dam, which was to be built at the confluence of the Salt and Verde Rivers, was billed by proponents as an integral part of this essential public utility project (Espeland 2002, 379).

Not everyone, however was pleased at the prospect of a dam. The Yavapai tribe, who inhabited the Fort McDowell Indian Reservation, would be forced off their land by the reservoir that would flood two-thirds of their tribal holdings. In 1973 they were offered 30 million dollars in exchange for their land, roughly $70,000 for each tribal

member (well over $300,000 in 2006 dollars). That offer was summarily rejected (Welsh 1985, 250). At the heart of the struggle was the fact the tribe regarded the land as much more than real estate. It was sacred. Without the land they would have no religion. "If the land is gone, there is no church, no altar," wrote Elizabeth Brandt, a University professor who works with many Arizona tribes (qtd. in Espeland 2002, 202).

The tribal members were frustrated by the government's lack of understanding of this connection between the people and their land. Residents turned to comparisons in an attempt to convey the relationship. "They would ask a negotiator how much money he would charge for his children, or whether he would be willing to accept a 'similar' child in exchange for his own child" (Espeland 2002, 208). Even these striking comparisons failed to convince the Bureau of Reclamation of the toll the project would exact on the Yavapai way of life. Ultimately, the tribe was forced to adopt more aggressive tactics.

Although their bond to the land was perhaps the most important factor in the Yavapai's refusal to leave, there were practical aspects as well. The tribal members recognized that it was the land that bound their people together and they well remembered the tragedies that befell other tribes who had relinquished their land for money, following World War II (Espeland 2002, 202).

The Yavapai successfully opposed the dam, despite the fact that their internal resources were limited. There were only 400 people on the reservation, forty percent of whom were unemployed and two-thirds made less than $5,000 a year (Espeland 1998, 284). But there were also aspects of their situation from which Yavapai benefited. They used their traditionally inferior status to generate outside support and to maintain member morale (Espeland 2002, 184). They gained tremendous advantage from employing the

"Yavapai Identity" as a unifying force.

In 1981 the tribe staged a march from the reservation to the state capital 32 miles away. The march was billed as a reenactment of the Trail of Tears. The original Trail of Tears, which took place in the winter of 1875, was the result of an order by Ulysses Grant to relocate 1,400 Yavapai to a relatively infertile Apache reservation 200 miles away. It is widely suspected that contractors who sold supplies to the reservations believed the tribe was becoming too self-sufficient and allegedly used their political connections to uproot the Yavapai. The march lasted almost two weeks and many died of starvation, frostbite or fatigue. Linking the two marches reinforced the claim by movement leaders that protection of the land was a cultural imperative. It reminded participants of Yavapai identity, their long history of broken treaties and that the Yavapai have always been and are still being oppressed (Espeland 2002, 188, 208, 220)

The Yavapai also had the benefit of some external resources as well. One influential supporter was U.S. Interior Secretary Stewart Udall. Udall ensured that native concerns were addressed, and was a strong advocate for taking Orme Dam out of the extensive dam project (Coffeen 1972, 360). There was also support from unexpected sources, for example, local citizens who used the untamed river for recreational enjoyment. One particularly colorful group was the "tubers", who showed up at hearings wearing swimsuits and innertubes to protest the dam (Espeland 2002, 119). The tubers also demanded to be included in the cost-benefit study, although the methodology of this proved troublesome and was excluded from the final analysis (Espeland 2002, 160). These groups brought not only resources, but also legitimacy to the movement, which was a significant factor in the movement's success.

Analyzing the Adivasi and Yavapai

At first glance, these struggles seem to be very different cases, perhaps too different to provide a useful comparison. It would be ideal, in terms of evaluation, for these two cases to have occurred in the same place and time: such a case study would ensure that both the essential factors of political opportunity and available resources were equivalent. Unfortunately, however, this kind of ideal example is rarely found in any study of comparative politics. In this research it was difficult to find a comparable morally motivated case because purely moral struggles don't appear in developing countries nearly as often as materially-motivated ones.

These cases are fairly comparable in many ways, however. The cases are remarkably similar in that both deal with dam displacement, the groups affected are indigenous people economically tied to the land and who are exceptionally poor by relative standards. They could not survive without the land or the community it supported. Also, these two cultures, significantly different from the majority, were being sacrificed by their respective governments at the altar of nation building. These communities were seen by government institutions (although this of course was never verbalized) as expendable in the name of progress. In the Narmada movement, when ousted families asked for an explanation for their suffering, the government said it was for the "larger, national" interest (Sangvai 2000, 39).

The two case studies provide a useful comparison of the two extremes on the continuum of participant motivations. One example clearly demonstrates a movement driven by material gains, the more common of the two. Many movements at least *begin*

with material grievances because people like to be able to clearly see why they should be involved and how they might benefit from movement involvement. Nothing is clearer in this respect than personal gain. While it is common for movements to evolve moral aspects over time, the incentive for personal gain certainly helps a movement become established.

In the second case, the Yavapai movement was clearly based much more on moral convictions. Here, the core issues were preservation of culture, religion, and history. This is not to say that there were no material gains to be had, at least by certain groups within the movement. One example is the recreational opportunities that would be lost. The hope of maintaining a free-flowing river brought in the support of the tubers, fishermen and others who enjoyed the river in its natural state. This illustrates the fact that although movements may originate from moral conflicts, they almost always develop a materialistic component. Examples of purely moral movements are incredibly rare. In fact, human materialism has proven to be an excellent motivator, one which movement leaders exploit whenever possible. Thus, most movements include at least some participants who stand to gain something personally.

It seems the vast majority of movements keep a foot in both camps, and for good reason. In the Narmada case, the material gain of economically viable land (if only keeping the land they already have) is a strong motivator. There are other people involved in that struggle, however, who do not stand to gain anything material. City-dwellers who lend their support and the intellectual leaders who devote time and energy don't have a material stake in the struggle. For these contributors, the incentive is something entirely different. They see the project as an injustice or unnecessary. This

kind of scenario is very common in movements. As we have seen, not all participants are there for the same reasons. Because of this, movement leaders must bill the struggle in a variety of ways, casting a wide net in order to capture as many supporters as possible.

Another interesting pattern that arose from comparing these two cases was the trend for movements to evolve from material motivations to moral ones. Of course, this certainly isn't always true, but these two cases support the hypothesis that movements more commonly begin with a material concern and move towards a moral goal, or at least incorporate a moral goal. Why not the other way around? First, as stated before, material gains are great motivators and can get a movement off the ground, so if there are material benefits to be gained, they are usually promoted early in the movement.

Another explanation could be because beginning with a moral goal and then shifting to a material goal seems to somehow cheapen the entire movement. For example, if the Yavapai had originally voiced their discontent in terms of not being offered enough money for their land, their claim that they couldn't "sell their mother" would have been much less convincing. Another possible conclusion is that some kinds of moral fights are less compatible with material goals. A future study containing more cases could shed some light on this issue, but these two cases cannot provide a definite conclusion here.

Resource Mobilization in Light of the Cases

As mentioned earlier, a significant element contributing to the success or failure of movements is the conviction of their participants. Simply participating in a movement definitely provides some benefits to members; involvement brings a sense of belonging, camaraderie, accomplishment, altruism and meaning to one's life. But people don't tend

to mobilize for small causes because there are always risks involved, too. Many Yavapai who were engaged in the movement spoke of the strain on their family as a result of their involvement: they felt they spent most of their time either just returning from, or leaving for a meeting. The fact is, movements are labor-intensive, which takes a toll on people and their loved ones. Participants always bear the emotional weight of commitment, and the loss of valuable time.

So unless the cause is great enough to offset its cost in money, time and emotional drain on participants and their families, there will be no movement. But, as said before, having resources and political opportunities lower the cost of action. Thus, there is a sliding scale between how strongly the cause is felt by participants, how much political opportunity exists and how many resources are available. The weaker the convictions of participants, the more opportunity and resources a movement needs to be successful. The reverse is also true.

This idea supports the resource mobilization theory. If there *is* in fact a sort of recipe for movement mobilization (more motivation needs fewer resources, less motivation needs more) it might be possible for a movement to have enough resources and opportunity that it could propagate a very minor grievance. This may be true theoretically, but it is doubtful that there could ever be a movement which enjoyed such an overwhelming abundance of resources and political opportunity that participants actually needed very little true motivation. In fact, it seems that this really wouldn't be a "movement" at all. Such a situation would hardly need participants, or at least not enough to classify as a movement.

Because movements are never able to rely entirely upon external resources and

political opportunity for success, leaders must depend on participant motivation to carry

movements. In order to alter or create attitudes which attract members and encourage

participation, leaders devise social movement frames. Resource mobilization theorists

acknowledge that there must be some kind of grievance to create a movement, but they

believe that through framing, movement leaders can attract participants and expand

movements, regardless of how small the original grievance. A deeper understanding of

how leaders create and use frames can help to evaluate the validity of this hypothesis.

Social Movement Frames

The study of framing began with sociologist Erving Goffman. Goffman described

frames as schema that allow individuals "to locate, perceive, identify, and label"

occurrences within their own lives (Goffman 1986, 21). From these "individual frames",

social scientists gradually applied the concept to group frames in social movements

(Snow and Benford 2000 B, 464). Snow and Benford describe social movement frames

as this:

> "Frames help to render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby
> function to organize experience and guide action [by] simplifying and
> condensing aspects of the 'world out there' but in ways that are intended
> to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander
> support, and to demobilize antagonists" (qtd. in Snow and Benford 2000
> B, 614).

Framing is used to shape the way in which people perceive situations. This can be

accomplished by the way an action or event is presented, by connecting it to other actions

or events, or by highlighting some actions or events more than others. These techniques

are used to remind people why the movement, whatever its goal, is worth individual and

collective sacrifice.

Collective action frames also define the goals of a movement. If a group's goals align with available political opportunity or some external resource (as the Yavapai's goals were in sync with those of Interior Secretary Stewart Udall) the probability of success is higher. Therefore, frames are often tailored to align a movement's goals with available resources. A single frame usually cannot accomplish all necessary tasks. Commonly, a movement will employ several frames to satisfy these different requirements (Kowalchuk 2005, 241; Westby 2002, 289). In the Narmada case, movement leaders recognized the need to impact several different target groups: the state, public bystanders (citizens not directly involved with the movement) (Snow, Soule, and Kriesi 2004, 199-201), and those directly affected by the dam (Baviskar 2004, 226). In order to maximize participation and maintain long-term support, each group required a different frame.

While a movement frame accomplishes a number of things, motivating and mobilizing participants are two of its most vital tasks. To encourage existing participants and bring in new members, frames must address three core issues: the first, diagnostic framing, is perhaps the most basic element of a social movement frame. Movement participants need something to mobilize against, therefore diagnostic framing assigns blame for an adverse situation to guilty parties or institutions (Snow and Benford 2000 B, 616).

In addition to identifying a perpetrator, movements also need a strategy for addressing key problems: essentially, a plan of attack. This is the second element of a movement's framing, known as prognostic framing.

Finally, motivational framing is utilized to encourage people to join and stay active in the movement and make people more supportive of the cause (Snow and Benford 2000 B, 617). In order for people to effectively mobilize, they must not only feel wronged, but must also believe their efforts can alter the situation (qtd. in Morris 2000, 446). At a minimum, participation must invoke a feeling of satisfaction among members from simply making their grievances known (Kowalchuk 2005, 240). Motivational framing attempts to accomplish these goals.

Elements of an Effective Frame

Movements need to take every advantage in order to be successful; leaders cultivate and capitalize on members' motivations utilizing collective action frames. That said, an effective frame is often difficult create. First of all, a frame must resonate with the intended audience (Snow et al 1986, 477). As Goffman discussed, people employ individual frames to assess everyday circumstances; they rely on past experience to decide how to react to current situations. Created movement frames must be consistent with constituents' individual frames (Babb 1996, 1033).

To achieve this resonance, Snow and Benford assert a frame must both be perceived as credible and believable (2000 B, 620). Frame credibility requires continuity among beliefs, claims, and actions of the movement and there must be an apparent correlation between frames and actual events. In practice, a movement's credibility depends largely on the credibility of the 'frame articulator', typically the movement leader (Snow and Benford 2000 B, 620). In the Narmada case, for example, Medha Patkar (the intellectual who began the movement) initiated her campaign by gaining the trust of the valley inhabitants by living there (McCully 1996, 301).

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Salience of a given frame (the second element required for resonance) depends, in turn, on three factors: consistency with everyday experiences, relevance to personal beliefs and connection with the cultural ideology (Snow and Benford 2000 B, 621). In the Yavapai movement, leaders intentionally kept cultural values at the forefront of the movement because tribal history is an integral part of the cultural ideology and this connection made participation appear to be a cultural responsibility; this method was extremely powerful in a community that placed so much importance on heritage.

After its initial alignment, a movement frame cannot remain static because movements are subject to constantly changing environments (Snow and Benford 2000 A, 57). Not only the needs of participants, but the external environment from which movements gather resources, are continually shifting. Frames, then, must constantly adapt in order to remain effective. As Snow et al. profess, "Frame alignment, once achieved, cannot be taken for granted because it is temporally variable and subject to reassessment and renegotiation" (1986, 476).

Frame Shifts

Frame alignment and frame shifting occur for a variety of reasons. In the Narmada Dam movement for example, leaders often changed their prognostic framing simply because they found that dramatic shifts revived battle-weary participants (Fisher 1995, 191). In this case, a physically demanding approach, such as blockading the road to the dam to stop the flow of materials to the site, was followed by less demanding tactics, like writing letters to foreign lenders (Palit 2003, 8).

Frame shifts can result either from ideological changes within a movement or a strategic decision by framers (as in the preceding example). Although one might assume

that frames presented by a movement mirror the ideology of its leaders, this is not always true (Westby 2002, 292). In many cases it is necessary for leaders to alter frames in order to make the movement more marketable. The Yavapai might talk more about the importance of honoring treaties when pandering to Congress and more about river habitats to environmental groups. Framers must maximize their effectiveness by fine-tuning their appeals to correspond with the beliefs and values of their target audience (Kowalchuk 2005, 241, Westby 2002, 287).

This kind of highlighting certain issues and downplaying others allows movements to gain maximum support in a variety of ways. A delicate balance must be reached in order to cater to a movement's "cultural setting, [a movement's] political opponents and the militants and ordinary citizens whose support it needs" (Tarrow 1996, 123). That said, organizers must also avoid being perceived as inconsistent or insincere.

Frame Development and Modification

There are three basic processes through which frames are developed and manipulated. The first, the discursive process, deals with frame development. In this process, a frame evolves and matures through communication among movement members. This can result from two primary tactics. Frame articulation is the discussion of how events are related in order to present a picture of the situation. This may be connecting two seemingly unrelated events. In the case of the Yavapai, movement leaders effectively associated the Trail of Tears with the building of Orme Dam as two examples of attempted ethnocide.

Frame amplification is the second way for a frame to be developed or enhanced by internal discussion. In this case, specific events are highlighted while others are

downplayed to make a perpetrator's actions seem more egregious (Tarrow 1996, 122).

Frame formation and manipulation can also be stimulated through contested processes, in which frames are altered in response to conflict. These challenges are categorized as frame disputes, counterframing, or dialectic tension. Frame disputes arise from within a movement as disagreements about the diagnosis and prognosis of a frame. Counterframing arises from pressure initiated from outside the movement that attempts to undermine the validity of a group's frame. Repeated counterframing efforts between opposing groups can lead to framing one-upmanship, referred to as "framing contests" (Ryan 1991).

These types of conflicts are evident between the NBA and the government in the Narmada movement. The government first called on those who were to be displaced to make personal sacrifices so that the lives of their countrymen would be vastly improved. As the former chairman of the Narmada Valley Development Agency stated, "The family getting displaced thus makes a sacrifice ... so that others may live in happiness" (qtd. in Baviskar 2004, 223). But the families living on the Narmada were unwilling to make that sacrifice and began framing a movement against the state's agenda. To counter this frame, the government shifted its stance, asserting that those who had already been relocated welcomed the move and viewed it as a step toward a better life (Baviskar 2004, 223). As demonstrated here, the struggle between opposing groups can precipitate frame shifts; this is counterframing.

The final way in which movement frames evolve is the strategic process, also called frame alignment. Through this process, movements adapt their frames to achieve specific goals such as the acquisition of resources or the recruitment of members. As

discussed earlier, resources are incredibly important to the success of a movement, so

frames evolve in order to better situate the movement to benefit from available resources

(Snow and Benford 2000 B, 624). To achieve resonance, as discussed previously,

movements turn to frame alignment so that movement frames can adapt to the myriad of

personal and cultural frameworks in any society.

<u>Frame Alignment</u>

The concept of frame alignment includes four basic sub-categories. The first is

frame bridging which is the attempt by movement framers to connect two similar but

structurally independent frames (Snow et al 1986, 467). Frame amplification, the second

type, relies on strengthening people's pre-existing beliefs. If, in the Narmada case, some

Adivasi believed that the government was corrupt, but for one reason or another did not

feel that it was a paramount issue, movement leaders would most likely use frame

amplification to attract those individuals. Because a key factor of success is a frame's

ability to connect with existing frames, it is not surprising that frame amplification is one

of the most utilized framing strategies (Snow and Benford 2000 B, 624). This strategy

seems to be particularly valuable in groups that hold beliefs which are radically different

from the cultural mainstream. In order to survive and prosper, these groups must redefine

and clarify certain aspects of their attitudes which *are* in agreement with the larger social

group (Berbrier 1998). Neither the Narmada or Yavapai movements were outside

cultural expectations, therefore this tactic was unnecessary. In fact, both originated in

cultures that were accustomed to social unrest and incorporated that into their political

tactics.

The third strategic alignment process, frame transformation, relies on changing

people's perception of events which they have already cataloged into some other framework (Snow et al 1986, 474). Although it appears to be a commonly-used strategy, research on this type of frame alignment has been limited (Snow and Benford 2000 B, 625).

The final way leaders alter frames to gather support is referred to as frame extension. When using this strategy, movement framers broaden the scope of the initial frame in order to attract a wider cross-section of prospective supporters (Snow et al 1986, 472). We see this kind of frame alignment in the Narmada case more recently. The shift that created NAPM, the movement that identified and supported any people's movement against a destructive state, was implemented gradually, which probably made the relationship between the two frames more clear and convincing. But despite this, frame extension was not particularly successful for the Narmada movement, although it often is (Cornfield and Fletcher 1998, 1305).

While frame extension can capture more support, participants, and resources for a movement, it does have inherent weaknesses. As with most framing decisions, frame extension can cause severe disagreements within movements concerning "issues of ideological 'purity,' efficiency, and 'turf'" (Snow and Benford 2000 B, 625). This tactic is vulnerable to instability, resulting from a frame becoming overly vague or ambiguous. This was one of the problems that befell the Narmada movement when leaders attempted to extend existing frames. Their new all-encompassing frame proved too broad. The effect was that participants were not convinced that they should make even more sacrifices in order to further campaigns in which they were not directly invested (such as closing a Coca-Cola plant). This problematic state is referred to as "clouding". As Snow

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et al caution, "Adherents and conscience constituents may not embrace the extended frame as enthusiastically as they would a relatively clear, domain-specific frame" (1986, 478). If the frame extension is not a logical continuation of the original ideals, the entire movement is at risk of losing credibility (Youngman 2003, 353).

Framing tactics used by the Narmada and Yavapai

As outlined above, both the Narmada and Yavapai employed a variety of framing tactics. The appropriateness of a frame, and also changes made after the initial selection, depends on the intended audience. Here, pertinent questions for framers are, what kinds of frames do potential participants already have from which new frames could be extended and which existing frames require alterations so that new frames can be accepted? What events do participants consider important, and how were those events initially interpreted? Framers also must take into account factors beyond the beliefs of potential new supporters. An example of this would be the way in which opponents or the media have already framed a given issue.

In the two cases discussed here, leaders employed some of the same techniques. Both used frame bridging to align their campaign with environmental concerns, and connect with existing indigenous rights frames. The Yavapai employed frame amplification, heavily emphasizing the importance of cultural preservation. The Narmada movement leaders used frame extension when broadening their scope to any social injustice at the hands of the state and made a diagnostic shift when they moved to total opposition of the dam.

This illustrates framing tactics are not necessarily specific to the kinds of

motivations they are framing around. It also implies that there is no one framing tactic that works best in all cases. Although movement leaders constantly reevaluate their strategies, they almost never hit on one perfect frame that can sustain the movement for the entire campaign. While there may be (and usually is) some prominent theme(s) that remain unchanged throughout a movement's existence, the frames used to articulate its message are constantly shifting.

The Ganges River: the Apathetic Masses

The Ganges River flows for 1,560 miles from the glaciers in the Himalayas, through India and Bangladesh to the Bay of Bengal. To most Hindus, who comprise 13 percent of the world population, the river is a Mecca (CIA). A person who bathes in the river is cleansed of his sins and a person whose ashes are scattered in the river breaks the cycle of rebirth and reaches nirvana. While this river is incredibly important spiritually, it is also vital in secular ways. Nearly one-fifteenth of the world's population lives on its banks and many more rely on it for irrigation and drinking water (Lyle 2006). To the people of the Ganges, this waterway is sustenance, both spiritual and physical. It is life and death.

Because so many rely on this river for physical and spiritual "life", it is important to keep it clean. Every day, however, an estimated 1.3 billion liters of raw sewage flow into the Ganges. No more than 250 of the country's 4,000 cities and towns have sewer systems (Cooper 1997) and industrial waste, fertilizers and chemicals pour into the river by the tons (Lyle 2006). Deforestation has dramatically increased its silt load, and irrigation has drastically lowered its volume; as a result, water at the river's banks, where

people go to bathe, do laundry and obtain water, is stagnant (Sharma 1997). Water samples collected in Varanasi revealed fecal-coliform counts 10,000 percent higher than the standard for safe bathing (McLeod 2004).

Not surprisingly, disease flourishes along the Ganges; 40 to 45 percent of those who bathe in the river have skin or stomach ailments and water-borne diseases have become commonplace. Hepatitis, dysentery, typhoid and cholera claim the lives of more than two million Indian children each year (Stille 1999, 60). The World Health Organization estimates 80 percent of all diseases in the country and one third of all deaths can be traced to poor sanitation and untreated sewage (Cooper 1997).

In addition to health concerns, there are important environmental issues. Rare and little-understood species live in the Ganges. The Ganges River Dolphin, for example, is one of only four types of river dolphins in the world. Dams, fishing, and dolphin hunting, together with pollution, have pushed the animal to the edge of extinction. The rare freshwater Ganges Shark faces a similar fate.

By 1981 the Indian Government officially recognized the Ganges as a national resource and began looking seriously at possible clean-up options (Alley 2005, 160). The Ganga Action Plan (GAP), launched in 1985, instituted a string of improvements including 35 large sewage treatment plants (Sharma 1997) and 28 electric crematoria, along with stricter environmental laws.

These developments were funded by a variety of sources. The Dutch government designed and paid for two wastewater treatment plants. They also funded the restoration of sewer lines and construction of an industrial sewer to handle toxic leather tannery waste (Alley 2005, 166). Several nongovernmental organizations sponsored other

projects in the plan. India also received funding from the World Bank and development loans from Japan, France, England and the United States (Alley 2005, 160).

Despite the overwhelming international and nongovernmental support, the GAP proved fruitless, due largely to political corruption. The courts, on the other hand, worked hard to ensure that the GAP plans were properly implemented. From 1992 to 1995 the court dedicated every Friday to reviewing matters which dealt with pollution (Alley 2005, 149). M.C. Mehta, an activist and lawyer, argued two cases in front of the Supreme Court. One case demanded that tanneries be held to the environmental laws, the other dealt with the city of Kanpur not treating domestic sewage as ordered (Alley 2005, 146). As a result of these lawsuits, hundreds of factories were shut down. However, many cities named in the suit successfully claimed no responsibility due to lack of funding (Alley 2005, 149).

Analyzing the Ganges: Where are all the people?
At first glance, it would seem that the Ganges situation offers plenty of issues for mobilization, on either a moral or material basis. The river is sacred and the dominant faith places great emphasis on environmentalism (Alley 2005, 48). Rare species, on the brink of extinction, live in its waters. The health concerns are real and the pollution is clearly visible. Strangely, however there is no movement. A small group of intellectual elites organized the Swatcha Ganga in 1982, a movement dedicated to cleaning up the river, but there has been very little participation (Ahmed 1990, 44).

The three things upon which every social movement depends are political opportunity, resources, and participants. In this case there was ample political opportunity. Politicians were receptive to the movement as shown by interest in the

Ganga Action Plan (although its downfall was probably based in unrealistic views of India's capabilities and political corruption). The courts, as we have seen in both this and the Narmada case, were fairly sympathetic toward environmental movements and India is democratic, which also opens an array of political possibilities.

The second element, resources, is the most important element to the success of a social movement, according to resource mobilization theorists. So perhaps, if we follow the lead of Charles Tilly and the others, we could say the problem is a lack of external resources. In this case, however, resources are plentiful. The Swatcha Ganga is funded by the Sankat Mochan Temple, one of the most important temples in Varanasi, the largest city on the Ganges. This institution provides organization, a key internal resource that theorists cite in movement mobilization.

Religious frameworks have proven incredibly powerful mobilization tools, as shown by the US civil rights movement. Because India's "agency-laden institutions" did not produce adequate participation however, movement entrepreneurs attempted to reach sympathizers in other ways. They held music festivals, open forums, and street corner meetings. They organized conferences for priests, women, boatmen. They had contests in attempts to interest school children (Mishra 2005, 2; Ahmed 1990, 44). The public remained immovable.

The religious group also provided money. Many private donors, such as Oz GREEN, an Australian based environmental group, provide large amounts of capital to the project as well, and the Tides Foundation, a group based in the US which strives for social change, continues to provide money and technical support. It seems the movement is not suffering from a lack of funding or other kinds of support.

This movement does not suffer a lack of resources. There was (and still is) a favorable political climate. There was a preexisting organization. There was money. And media. And friends in high places. But there are no participants. Perhaps the entrepreneurs aren't framing the issue properly, although various organizations have tried a multitude of angles. They have attempted bridging it to related frames, amplifying the environmental concerns. Leaders promoted the movement as a class struggle because most of those impacted by water quality are lower caste. Educational campaigns were waged for adults and children. They even tried changing the diagnostic frame by pointing fingers at Muslim tannery owners. There just wasn't support.

The primary reason for this lack of support is that people simply feel no sense of injustice. They never believed the river was polluted. Not that they couldn't see the effluent, smell the stench. Hindus simply believe the river is pure. In religious doctrine the story is that the Ganges was a river that flowed in heaven. The sons of a powerful king were killed and he begged the Ganges to come to earth and wash over them, thus allowing them to reach Nirvana. Because of this story Hindus believe that bathing in the river cleanses one of sins and scattering ones ashes there releases him or her from the cycle of death and rebirth.

This religious belief is what keeps people from demanding that the river be cleaned. For Hindus there is a clear distinction between purity and cleanliness. Regarding the Ganges specifically, they recognize that the waste can be harmful (Alley 2005, 79). They are not ignorant to the fact that water contaminated with human waste is unhealthy for drinking and bathing. They see the tons of sludge oozing into the river every day. One of their core beliefs, however, is that "sacred power" can neutralize the

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negative impacts of such waste. One man, uniquely equipped to understand this dichotomy says, "There is a struggle and turmoil inside my heart. I want to take a holy dip. I need it to live. The day does not begin for me without the holy dip. But, at the same time, I know what is B.O.D."–biochemical oxygen demand–" and I know what is fecal coliform." He is the head of one of the largest temples in India and a professor in the science department at a nearby university. He continues to bathe in the river five times a day (Stille 1999, 58).

There are ample resources and an abundance of political opportunity here. Various frames have been put forth in unsuccessful attempts to ignite some kind of passion for a clean river. This example demonstrates movements' need for a true grievance, a key element lacking in this case. The people along the Ganges believe so strongly in religious doctrine that even the recognition of polluted water and the scientific knowledge to support it, cannot keep people out of its waters.

Conclusion: What All This Proves

I had several aims at the outset of this paper. I wished to reiterate the fact that movements rely on external resources, but also that internal resources are incredibly valuable. Internal resources are provided by movement participants and in order for people to join a movement and bring their assets with them, they must be sufficiently motivated. I also, by exploring the Ganges case, intended to refute the resource mobilization argument that some grievance *always* exists, and with the proper environment, a movement will emerge.

I do think that quite often people have some sort of underlying complaint but they

are willing to cope with it because the cost of action is not offset by whatever gains are possible. Leaders recognize this and use collective action frames to encourage people to join a movement by making the problem appear worse than it might be perceived otherwise. They make success seem more possible, and costs (if they cannot be downplayed altogether), seem worth the risk. Often, with the proper frame, movement leaders can coax hesitant people into action.

In many cases, indeed in most cases, there is motivation to be found, as some resource mobilization theorists purport. If a movement can create an environment where participants have something to gain, even if it is simply the camaraderie and companionship of belonging to a group, and if participants have little to lose, movements can materialize and persevere. Resources play a large part in lowering the cost of movement involvement and thus are important to their ultimate success. It seems that a very convincing argument could be made for the claim that a movement cannot be successful without plenty of resources. What this means, however, is that resources are necessary, *but not sufficient* for a movement to surface and persist.

The Ganges case is the situation needed to disprove the idea that ample resources are sufficient for the generation of a successful movement. The environment was incredibly well-suited for a movement, but there was no true grievance. The fact that the Ganges situation may appear to warrant an uprising to those on the outside is quite irrelevant. A true grievance must be felt by the participants, and while social movement frames can go a long way towards generating motivation, they certainly cannot do it all.

Sometimes it is not a question of resources or political opportunity and there is no amount of framing that will bring people to arms. When it comes right down to it, the

participants themselves must feel as though the cause is worthy and without that the rest

is irrelevant. Sometimes, even though it seems there should be, there just isn't a

movement.

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