Recruiting Strangers and Friends: Moral Shocks and Social Networks in Animal Rights and Anti-Nuclear Protests*

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Recent work on social movement recruitment emphasizes the importance of pre-existing social networks and underestimates that of cognitive cultural messages, which are sometimes transmitted across these networks, but at other times are broadcast to strangers. In the absence of networks, moral shocks may be necessary for recruiting strangers, and the most effective ones are conveyed by powerful condensing symbols. Even those researchers who have examined the "frames" necessary for recruitment have been unduly influenced by the social-network exemplar, overlooking broader cultural "themes" in society at large. Through surveys of animal rights and anti-nuclear protesters, we distinguish two mechanisms of recruitment to protest, one based primarily on appeals to new recruits, the other on activating existing networks. Fewer animal rights protesters rated family, friends, and previous activism in other causes as reasons for their animal rights participation; they were often recruited directly by moral shocks in the form of visual and verbal rhetoric.

During the 1980s, the U.S. animal rights movement grew rapidly, to encompass hundreds of thousands of active participants and millions of sympathizers. The recruitment of members into this movement challenges common theories of how people are drawn into protest movements. The emphasis in most recent work has been on the pre-existing social networks through which movement ideologies spread and new people are recruited. As McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald (1988:713) summarize it,

Even in those rare instances where new frames are constructed from scratch—frame transformations, to use the term proposed by Snow and his coauthors—it is hard to see how the process could occur anywhere but in an established collective setting.

Yet prior organization and networks seem insufficient as an explanation of how animal rights activists were recruited. A comparison with the direct-action wing of the movement against nuclear energy reveals differences in recruitment, with one movement relying more on recruitment of intimates through social networks, the other more on recruitment of strangers through moral shocks. Cultural meanings are important in both cases, but understanding stranger recruitment requires attention to cultural meanings in society at large as well as those within existing social movement networks and organizations.

Considerable research demonstrates that recruitment depends on processes of "frame alignment," by which organizers try to forge agreement between their own diagnoses and goals and those of potential recruits (Snow et al. 1986; Snow and Benford 1988, 1992). Some ambivalence remains in this work. The incomplete embrace of a "social constructionist" perspective leaves the reader unsure whether frames succeed because they better reflect

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realities or better reflect perceptions of reality (Gamson 1992a). Concentration on the work of organizers in formulating frames rather than on the pre-existing beliefs of recruits makes it even more unclear, except ad hoc and post hoc, which frames will find the widest resonance. These lacunae seem to arise because the authors' primary exemplar—the image that guides their thinking—continues to be recruitment through social networks rather than the recruitment of strangers through rhetorical appeals. Redressing this imbalance will further our understanding of the cultural meanings behind frame alignment. Intimates and strangers both need to be persuaded, but in different ways and against different backgrounds of shared assumptions.

Insistence on the importance of existing networks for collective action is part of what Piven and Cloward (1992) see as the tendency of recent research to "normalize" protest, to make it seem a regular part of everyday politics. They argue that a minimal level of social organization ("numbers, propinquity, and some communication") is required, but that this is found in virtually all human societies:

To be sure, people have to be related to one another; they must have some sense of common identity, some sense of shared definitions of grievances and antagonists, some ability to communicate, and so on. But these requisites do not depend on the dense and enduring lateral relationships posited by the RM school (1992:310).

In some cases, new networks can be developed through the recruitment of strangers.

Understanding stranger recruitment requires careful attention to culture—a topic of increasing importance in social-movement research (Morris and Mueller 1992; Laraña et al. 1994; Jasper forthcoming). Culture has been studied in two complementary ways: as a set of tools that humans actively and creatively use as part of their strategies for dealing with life's challenges (Swidler 1986), or as a structured system of meanings and symbols with its own internal logic that humans must use according to given rules (Douglas 1966, 1973; Sahlin 1976). These two approaches correspond to the duality of culture: Like all structures, it imposes considerable constraints but also allows for change and creativity. It is both structured and structuring (Giddens 1979). If Snow and his collaborators emphasize the creativity of organizers, Gamson (1992b) elaborates the structured meanings already out there in U.S. society. Both are important. Strangers can be recruited because of the beliefs and feelings they already have.

**Recruitment Theories**

**Networks**

Recruitment of new members is probably the most studied aspect of social movements. Several factors are prominent in explanations of this mobilization. As Marx originally pointed out, the physical concentration of those with a common grievance is a prerequisite for action. This seems to hold true for workers during industrialization (Shorter and Tilly 1974), African Americans during urbanization (McAdam 1982), and students in their "youth ghetto" (Lofland 1969). This concentration, it has been argued, must be accompanied by social organization before recruitment can succeed (Oberschall 1973). Morris (1984) found the financial and personal networks of African American churches, for instance, to be crucial to the emergence of the civil rights movement.

Thus, previous contact with someone in the movement is the most important factor explaining an individual's recruitment (Snow, Zurcher, Jr., and Eckland-Olson 1980). Factors that make this contact more likely include prior activism in other causes (McAdam 1988; Fendrich and Lovoy 1988) and membership in a subculture that values political activity (Jasper 1985). These influences also make the person attuned to the ideas and arguments of an
emerging movement. All these factors are reinforced by the clustering of mutually supportive social movements during the active phases of cycles of protest (Tarrow 1983, 1992).

"Bloc recruitment" is the extreme case of reliance on social networks, for here entire networks are brought intact into a movement (Oberschall 1973). For example, busloads of Christian fundamentalists, organized and led by their preachers, visited state legislatures to oppose the Equal Rights Amendment (Mansbridge 1986). Because members of blocs typically share many cultural meanings, they are recruited to new issues that they perceive as a logical extension of existing concerns.

Frame Alignment

Direct personal contacts are important because they allow organizers and potential participants to "align" their "frames," to achieve a common definition of a social problem and a common prescription for solving it (Snow et al. 1986). In other words, at the heart of a structural approach, focusing on the proximity of bodies, is a recognition that "the immediate impetus to collective action remains a cognitive one" (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1988:713). Many studies of the cognitive work behind the social construction of protest, however, reject attitudes as sufficient explanations (since many have the same attitudes but do not protest), and even dismiss psychological attributes altogether as significant causes (Muller 1980). We believe that the cognitive and emotional processes involved in recruitment need greater elaboration before we can judge their power. Indeed, works on the importance of networks (Snow, Zurcher, Jr., and Eckland-Olson 1980) are not testing the effects of cognitive processes, much less comparing networks and meanings as causal factors (Snow, Zurcher, Jr., and Eckland-Olson 1983). Networks are important because of the meanings they transmit. Table 1 defines frames and other cultural meanings discussed in this paper.

Table 1 • Types of Cultural Meanings and Their Supports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals and Proposals</td>
<td>Explicit, specific policy proposals or critiques of existing practices</td>
<td>Free-ranges for hens; ban on painful experiments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frames</td>
<td>Packages of proposals and critiques that fit together to highlight certain aspects of the issues</td>
<td>Rights of animals; animals as innocent sufferers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Frames</td>
<td>Analyses and underlying images, e.g., of modern society; often shared by several movements</td>
<td>Capitalism as driven by profits; critique of homocentric view of natural world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>Implicit cultural meanings, images, and feelings, an often incipient worldview, and widely shared in a society</td>
<td>Suspicion of experts, capitalism, or instrumentalism; harmony with nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condensing Symbols</td>
<td>Multireferent, visual or verbal encapsulation of other cultural meanings</td>
<td>Photo of cat in cage with electrodes planted in skull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plausibility Structures</td>
<td>Institutions and practices that make cultural meanings plausible or implausible</td>
<td>Contact with live animals as pets, not resources; life in modern bureaucratic societies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Snow et al. (1986:477) describe four ways in which the frames of social movement organizations and potential participants can be brought into alignment, but in asking "why framing processes succeed in some cases but not in others," they suggest only that success "involves the content or substance of proffered framings and their degree of resonance with
the current life situation and experience of the potential constituents." Snow and Benford (1988) usefully distinguish three successive types of framing necessary for successful recruitment: *diagnostic*, in which a movement convinces potential converts that a problem needs to be addressed; *prognostic*, in which it convinces them of appropriate strategies, tactics and targets; and *motivational*, in which it exhorts them to get involved in these activities. They argue that frames are more likely to be accepted if they fit well with the beliefs of potential recruits (if they are linked to a central belief of the audience, or to several interrelated beliefs of significant range or scope); if they involve empirically credible claims; if they are compatible with the life experiences of the audience; and, if they fit with the narratives the audiences tell about their lives. All their aspects of plausibility are different ways of saying that frames must resonate with the salient beliefs of potential recruits. Their discussions of symbols and rhetorics themselves, and of the pre-existing worldviews of potential recruits, need elaboration.

One problem with Snow and Benford's presentation is that empirical credibility is in the eyes of the beholder; what needs to be explained is why some beliefs and not others have it. Credibility (a.k.a. resonance) arises from the compatibility of new arguments with existing expectations, and it cannot be explained without considerable attention to prior beliefs and feelings. Snow and Benford (1988:208) say that the falsifiability of a claim increases its credibility, yet they give an example of a falsifiable claim—nuclear winter as a consequence of nuclear war—that had great cultural resonance, but that was not well supported when examined more closely. Snow and Benford seem to desire an "objective" way to judge the power of frames, but this power can only depend on the socially constructed worldviews of potential recruits. Frames resonate with potential recruits precisely because these recruits *already* have certain visions of the world, moral values, political ideologies, and affective attachments. Associating frames with their use in recruitment highlights the dynamic way that movements actively create new cultural meanings, but it tends to reduce those meanings to recruitment strategies. Movement organizers and participants do create new meanings, but only by appealing to and building on existing ones. Snow and Benford define a frame as:

an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the "world out there" by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one's present or past environment (1992:137).

Cultural meanings can certainly be shaped and transformed by groups and individuals, but they also already exist "out there," just as language is a pre-existing set of rules that we must, to some extent, adapt to. Because of the duality of culture, we must examine both the existing meanings and the creative transformations of those meanings by recruiters. Explaining resonance requires examination of the relationship between the frames and the entire repertory of cultural meanings that individuals have. Snow and Benford assert the importance of framing without showing in detail how this occurs, because they implicitly assume that people are being recruited through personal networks of those who share underlying worldviews. They do not need to examine the distribution of cultural images in society at large. They can restrict themselves to the policy packages that activate deeper, already-shared meanings; likewise they can give equal weight to diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing. To understand the recruitment of strangers, however, we must examine their pre-existing cultural images and beliefs; in these circumstances diagnostic framing will be more important than the other types.

Perhaps frame alignment has been closely linked to networks because of the kinds of movements studied, especially religious movements. The tendency to analyze religious and political movements in the same way necessarily de-emphasizes the cognitive content of movements in favor of organizational and network dynamics. The main argument for the importance of social networks in recruitment, Snow et al. (1980), found ten empirical efforts
to measure how many participants were recruited through people they knew in the movement. Eight were religious movements, one the March of Dimes (a huge voluntary organization whose relevance to protest movements is not clear), one a small (n = 31) study of the anti-abortion movement. In addition, the authors added their own evidence from another religious movement and from University of Texas students (apparently undergraduates). For strangers to join a movement, they must already have opinions and feelings of their own: They already detest abortion or care deeply about animals. They are recruited to a group or movement, not converted to a belief system. Younger and less experienced, students may not yet have such explicit beliefs. (If so, we should be cautious in generalizing from student-based movements.) More important, it is not clear what kind of prior beliefs could lead one to self-recruit into a religious movement. It seems unlikely that one would have Nichiren Shoshu beliefs without being a member. Here, recruitment entails conversion. For religious movements, being a member comes closer to being an end in itself; for political movements it is more likely a means—possibly to ends that the recruit already values.

**Themes and Master Frames**

Gamson (1992b) explores the meanings “out there” in U.S. culture for building political consciousness. In addition to meanings dealing with particular issues (e.g., nuclear power, affirmative action), he finds (1992b) four widespread pairs of “themes” and “counterthemes:” regarding technology, progress through technology versus harmony with nature; regarding power, interest-group liberalism versus popular democracy; regarding interpersonal dependence, self-reliance versus mutuality; and, regarding nationalism, global responsibility versus America first. These rhetorics are too broad to be easily used in concrete analysis, but they are an example of the cultural interpretation needed to establish the pre-existing cultural meanings to which organizers can appeal. If Snow’s frames are the sentences organizers formulate, Gamson’s themes are the words and grammar out of which they formulate them. Both are needed for a cultural explanation of recruitment, especially—but not exclusively—of strangers.

Snow and Benford (1992:138) try to get at broader meanings with their master frames (which “are to movement-specific collective action frames as paradigms are to finely tuned theories. Master frames are generic; specific collective action frames are derivative”), although their example of the nuclear freeze—a relatively specific proposal—seems misleading. We follow their definitions, though, thinking of frames as the coherent packages that movement ideologists and organizers put together—combining underlying assumptions, arguments, and practical goals—and master frames as both broader and less explicit than frames, more like the symbolic foundations of frames. Both are distinct from Gamson’s pre-existing cultural themes out there as raw materials for organizers to appeal to and, if they are lucky, reshape. To us, the nuclear freeze would be a proposal (the thing that is being framed); a frame would be the surrounding arguments and packaging of this and other proposals; a master frame might have to do with the dangers of nuclear weapons and war; deeper themes would be “the sanctity of life,” “critique of expertise,” or “harmony with nature.”

**Condensing Symbols**

Frames, master frames, and themes can be encapsulated in symbols that implicitly connote their arguments and meanings. Sapir (1935; also Turner 1967) contrasted a “referential symbol,” which had relatively straightforward meanings, with a “condensation symbol,” which
strikes deeper and deeper roots in the unconscious and diffuses its emotional quality to types of behavior or situations apparently far removed from the original meaning of the symbol ( Sapir 1935:493-4).

Condensing symbols are verbal or visual images that neatly capture—both cognitively and emotionally—a range of meanings and convey a frame, master frame, or theme. Organizers use such symbols to recruit members, especially strangers. A powerful symbol lends credibility to an explicit argument by connoting the implicit assumptions embedded in worldviews and common sense. The best evoke what Burke called a “god term:” a moral absolute that appears to be unquestionable (Jasper 1992). Like all culture, symbols are both connotative, evoking associations in an audience, and constitutive, helping to create the audience’s world.

Although some symbols are more powerful than others, they still do not resonate to the same extent or with the same meanings for everyone. Particular responses are affected by a person’s past experiences and present routines, which derive from “plausibility structures” that make certain claims appear more reasonable than others (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Berger 1970); Snow and Benford get at this with “experiential commensurability” and “narrative fidelity.” What we find plausible can be changed, no doubt, by current experiences. For example, many of us have intuitions about the world that, upon consideration, turn out to be inconsistent with other beliefs or practices (Snow et al. 1986). There are actors and institutions in any society—the news media, intellectuals, politicians, cultural producers and other gatekeepers—constantly shaping understandings, not just of the public, but of protestors themselves (Gitlin 1981; Schudson 1989). Gamson and Modigliani (1989), in one case, trace the relationship between the media’s framing of nuclear energy and the public’s. Social movement organizers work at persuading people, but they start from their audience’s existing plausibility structures and cultural meanings.

**Moral Shocks**

Important for all recruitment, can symbols, frames, and themes be activated in the absence of social ties? Jasper (forthcoming) uses the term “moral shock” to get at the first step in the recruitment of strangers: when an event or situation raises such a sense of outrage in people that they become inclined toward political action, even in the absence of a network of contacts. These are usually public events, unexpected and highly publicized (Walsh 1981, 1988, discusses “suddenly imposed grievances,” such as the accident at the Three Mile Island—TMI—nuclear plant), but they can also be the experiences of individuals, as the gradual discovery that one’s drinking water has been contaminated by a local factory or waste site (Krauss 1989). Those who have been shocked often search out political organizations. Many anti-abortion protestors joined the movement under the shock of Roe v. Wade in 1973. Luker (1984:137) says,

More of the people we interviewed joined the pro-life movement in 1973 than in any other year, before or since; and almost without exception, they reported that they became mobilized to the cause on the very day the decision was handed down.

Two-thirds of the anti-abortion activists in Luker’s California sample were self-recruited in this way. Moral shocks can serve as the functional equivalent of social networks, drawing people into activism by building on their existing beliefs.

Moral shocks do not arise only from suddenly imposed grievances; organizers try hard to generate them through their rhetorical appeals. The most effective shocks are those embodied in, or translatable into, powerful condensing symbols. McCarthy (1987) described the pro-choice movement as lacking social networks it could use in recruitment; because of this “social infrastructural deficit,” the movement had to use symbolic appeals to reach its supportive “sentiment pool” through direct-mail technologies. (Staggenborg 1991, questions
McCarthy's characterization of the movement, but our interest is in his theoretical point.) Analyzing the pro-choice case in terms of the social networks that are missing, McCarthy does not fully explore the cultural work that direct-mail groups need to do, or why some direct-mail appeals work and others do not. Despite their "deficit" qualities, direct-mail appeals have proliferated. They not only take advantage of events such as Supreme Court decisions, but they try to create through their own rhetoric a sense of crisis, shock, and outrage. The mail is not the only medium: Tables on streets and in shopping malls and door-to-door canvassing involve face-to-face appeals to strangers.

We see two mechanisms for recruitment: through existing organizations and networks, and through moral shocks. No doubt all movements use both (even those with pre-existing networks try to recruit strangers) but perhaps in differing proportions. Groups differ even within the same movement: Cable, Walsh, and Warland (1988), studying mobilization after the TMI accident, found that members of some groups had been recruited primarily through social networks, others mostly through "shared grievances." When pre-existing networks are activated, recruiters can take for granted more shared understandings, devoting more energy to prognostic and motivational framing. When these networks are absent and appeals to strangers are especially necessary, organizers must attempt more diagnostic framing. We see this contrast in anti-nuclear and animal rights protest: recruitment of friends primarily through existing networks, versus recruitment of strangers primarily through direct moral shocks. We turn to the data to explore the recruitment patterns, plausibility structures, and pre-existing cultural meanings behind each mobilization.

Methods and Data

Similar data were collected at three protests: an August 1984 demonstration of almost 1,000 people at the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant in California; an April 1988 rally of roughly 1,000 people protesting experiments on monkeys at New York University; and, a rally of 100 people opposed to animal experimentation at the University of California at Berkeley, also in April 1988. For Diablo Canyon, 136 surveys were completed at the protest and 137 were mailed in later. In New York 270 surveys were completed at the protest. At Berkeley, 35 surveys were mailed in. (In most analysis that follows we combine these to form one animal rights sample.) Thus at all three protests roughly one third of the demonstrators completed surveys. Questionnaires were distributed in all parts of each crowd, and although this method does not obtain representative samples, we feel our sampling yielded no obvious biases. Most questions about demographics, cultural beliefs, political activism, and recruitment into protest were identical in the three surveys. The Berkeley protest occurred during a weekday, limiting the kinds of people who could attend. The other two were on weekends.

The activities at the three protests were similar. Each began with speeches (Berkeley and Diablo Canyon) or chanting and picketing (New York), lasting one hour at Berkeley, two at New York, and three at Diablo Canyon. Then small groups of protestors began offering themselves for arrest by blocking roads or entrances; in New York and at Diablo Canyon roughly 100 people were quietly arrested. The Berkeley protest had been billed as a direct action event rather than a rally: Participants spent most of the day moving around the large campus chanting in front of buildings where animal research was conducted. Because all three protests included legal and illegal activities, there is no reason to believe the three appealed to different kinds of protestors with different tastes in tactics.

We supplement the survey data with other sources. We interviewed dozens of anti-nuclear and animal rights protestors, including both leaders and rank-and-file members (Jasper 1990; Jasper and Nelkin 1992; Jasper and Poulsen 1993). We also have read many newsletters and other texts generated by both movements. Interpretive content analysis of the
Animals' Agenda and It's About Times (put out by the Abalone Alliance, organizers of the Diablo protest) helped generate our analyses of the symbols used in the two movements. Finally, we were participant observers at 12 meetings of the animal rights group that sponsored the New York demonstration and at 20 animal rights demonstrations and marches.

One limit to our evidence is that we primarily worked backwards from protestors to their worldviews. Future research should be able to examine members of the public and tease out their cultural understandings, as Gamson (1992b) has through the use of focus groups. Then we could see how movement organizers try to find condensing symbols that appeal to these understandings. In this paper we mostly infer pre-existing values and meanings from prior activities.

Patterns of Recruitment

Protestors were asked what political issues (past or present) had helped involve them in their current cause. In the Diablo sample, 108 of the respondents (40 percent) answered open-ended questions about previous movements, naming 50 different ones. The most cited were anti-war activities (mentioned by 37); environmentalism (by 19); feminism and the women's movement (12); nuclear disarmament (11); civil rights (9); and animal rights (8). In the animal rights sample, slightly fewer (90 people, or 30 percent) cited other causes: peace/disarmament (17); civil rights and racism (15); environmentalism (12); the women's movement (10); Vietnam (8); opposition to U.S. military intervention (7); and the anti-nuclear movement (6).

Despite extensive political experience in both samples, the importance of personal networks in recruitment patterns differed. Asked to estimate the importance of a list of factors that might have involved them in their movements, the majority of Diablo protestors listed specific events, previous activism, and "family and friends" as very important (Table 2). Even the "events" were primarily protests in which the respondents had participated. Only 7 percent of the respondents said that neither previous activism nor family and friends were important, indicating that social networks helped draw almost all the respondents into the movement. These figures are in line with several studies cited in Snow, Zurcher, Jr., and Eckland-Olson (1980). In contrast, 27 percent of the animal rights protestors said that neither of these was important. Instead, animal rights respondents heavily chose the "other"
category and "reading" as very important. Most of the responses written in as "other" involved reading, listening, and watching television. Fewer than 10 percent of Diablo respondents mentioned these activities in their "other" category (through an oversight, they were not provided a "reading" entry.) The Diablo protestors were more likely to have joined the current protest because of previous activism: 51 percent said it had been "very important," compared to 33 percent of the animal rights samples.

In interviews with a small number of members of a local North Carolina animal rights group, Groves (1992:62) similarly found that 25 percent had heard of the group first through direct-mail memberships in national groups, 25 percent through the group's own literature distributed especially at tables, and 20 percent through advertisements and newspaper articles about the group. This is a movement with considerable recruitment of strangers.

Our interviews reinforce the image of two different recruitment mechanisms at work. One Diablo protestor commented:

When I first came to Diablo, I was already more interested in working against military intervention in Central America, but I came down because a lot of my friends were going, so it was easy to get a ride (personal interview, September 1984).

An animal rights protestor, however, said,

I remember my first photos of cats being tortured in experiments; it was at a table on Fifth Avenue in 1987. I didn't know anybody in the movement—in fact I thought they were a bunch of weirdos. But they were right about animal torture (personal interview, March 1990).

This type of response was common among animal rights activists. Most Diablo protestors had already shared an analysis of capitalism, and many shared an analysis of nuclear energy under capitalism; they needed only to be mobilized for this particular campaign. Animal rights recruits had to be persuaded of the issue itself.

Diablo organizers were tapping into an extensive subculture of political activism, whose members had been active in a range of protest movements (Jasper 1985; Epstein 1991). This is somewhat true for animal rights, but this movement also extensively recruited those not previously active. The symbolic connections between animal protection and other political causes may not be as clear as that between nuclear energy and other issues, so that existing political networks were not available to animal rights organizers. As a result, activists had to recruit strangers and had to work harder in their diagnostic framing.

Group meetings reflected this difference in the number of new recruits. At meetings of Trans-Species Unlimited, sponsor of the New York demonstration we surveyed, much time was spent discussing who was right and who was wrong in the animal rights controversy. At one meeting, for example, an argument evolved between those who wished to pressure pet stores into better conditions for their animals and those who felt that all pet stores should be abolished. We witnessed similar debates between abolitionists and reformists over farm animals and research laboratories. At Abalone Alliance meetings, and meetings of its component affinity groups, more time was spent arguing over the most effective tactics, taking for granted shared beliefs about the problem. We saw debates over the amount of time devoted to canvassing and fund-raising, for example. Diagnostic framing dominated the animal rights meetings, prognostic framing the anti-nuclear.

Before we examine the cultural meanings used in recruitment to these movements, we present demographic information to help explain recruits' plausibility structures. Demographics and basic values of the samples from the two movements are similar, helping to explain why the underlying themes used by the movements are, as we shall see, also similar.
Protestor Demographics

Table 3 outlines some demographics of the protesters in this study. In Berkeley 77 percent were women; in New York 67 percent were women. Ages and incomes ranged widely.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Characteristics of the Two Samples and a National Sample of Adults</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anti-nuclear</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Age (n=273)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent age 40 and over:</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School Graduates:</td>
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<tr>
<td>College Graduates:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have Household Incomes (current dollars):**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than $20,000:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than $50,000:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politically Left of Center:***</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Age figures for entire population; other figures for the population more than 15 years old (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1988).
** Because of inflation the cutoff of $20,000 in 1984 would have become roughly $21,000 in 1986 and $22,000 in 1988; $50,000 would have become roughly $52,500 in 1986 and $55,000 in 1988.
*** National figure is a combination of Extremely Liberal, Liberal, and Slightly Liberal categories from National Opinion Research Center. General Social Survey; other figures combine Liberal, Progressive, and Radical Left.

Occupations in the services, professions, and artistic sectors were heavily represented. Because most social movements are coalitions of different groups with diverse views, no single group of protesters can fully represent an entire movement. However, our data are confirmed by surveys that The Animals’ Agenda, the movement’s most prominent periodical, conducted of its readers and of movement organizations (also Jamison and Lunch 1992).

In organization after organization polled, [women] rarely dipped below 70 percent of the total membership, and several outfits showed a female participatory rate nearing 100 percent (The Animals’ Agenda, March/April 1985:10).

The same article reported that 84 percent of respondents were college graduates; 80 percent had “business and professional” occupations; 80 percent were urban or suburban residents. Their surveys asked about religious affiliation, finding that 65 percent responded “agnostic” or “atheist.” This lack of religious beliefs sharply distinguishes animal rights activists from the general population.

Many of our respondents were divorced, separated, or never married: 70 percent in New York and 51 percent in Berkeley (compared to 36 percent of adults nationwide; 45 percent in New York City). Only 21 percent of the New York and 31 percent of the Berkeley respondents were currently married (57 percent of adults nationwide and 46 percent of New Yorkers are). Eighty percent of our respondents had pets, compared to 61 percent of all U.S. households. Only 2 percent of the combined sample did not own pets currently and had not

1. Most activists distinguish the animal welfare movement, consisting of more traditional humane societies concerned especially with stray and pets, from the animal rights movement of the last 15 years, concerned with a broader range of issues. For the latter, our protesters and Animals’ Agenda’s 30,000 readers are probably typical.
2. Our surveys also allowed people to respond “living together,” so that our figure for divorced, separated, or never married would have been even higher had we followed the procedures of the public surveys. Both our surveys and public data also have a “widowed” category.
grown up with them. Seventy-two percent had more than one animal, and 31 percent had more than one species. Finally, the animal rights protesters we surveyed were politically left of center: 34 percent claimed to be liberal, and 31 percent progressive or radical left. The Animals’ Agenda (May/June 1983:26) had identical results—34 percent liberal and 32 percent radical—from its readers.

The 1984 Diablo Canyon protesters were similar to the animal rights protesters in many ways. Sixty percent were women. Forty percent had never been married. They were well educated: One third had done graduate work beyond college; 88 percent had at least started college. Their average age was also in the early 30s. Politically the anti-nuclear activists were further to the left than the animal rights respondents. Only 10 percent of the former described themselves as libertarian, conservative, or middle of the road, while 29 percent of the latter used these categories. More of the anti-nuclear respondents identified themselves as progressive or radical left (41 percent), and four percent wrote in “anarchist.”

These traits, supplemented by personal interviews, should help explain the resonance of certain condensing symbols and frames for movement participants. Working forward from individual traits, and backward from movement rhetoric, we should be able to describe the plausibility structures and cultural beliefs of the recruits.

Shared Cultural Themes

These two movements tapped into many similar cultural themes, especially Gamson’s “harmony with nature,” (1992b:136) in contrast to progress through technology: This involved ambivalence about science and technology, a critique of bureaucracy and “instrumental rationality,” and a general suspicion of progress. This “harmony with nature” theme has fared well in the last 30 years (Inglehart 1977; Piller 1991), undergirding a large cluster of recent movements. The anti-nuclear and animal rights movements rely on frames, symbols, and themes based on a critique of instrumentalism, defined as the reduction of humans and nature to the status of means, and the elevation of tools (bureaucracy, markets, technologies) to that of ends. Fear, anxiety, and outrage against instrumentalism are common themes in modern societies and make good starting points for many framing efforts.

In our surveys, one cluster of items (from Dunlap and Van Liere 1978) dealt with humans’ relationship to the environment. There was almost unanimous agreement with the statements “We are severely abusing the environment,” and “Human beings must live in harmony with nature in order to survive.” Respondents disagreed with the statement that “Humans have the right to modify the natural environment for our own ends.” A majority in both samples agreed that “There are limits to growth beyond which our industrialized society cannot expand” (see Table 4). Many scholars have isolated these statements as key beliefs in the “new environmental paradigm” held by participants in the environmental movement (Cotgrove 1982; Dunlap and Van Liere 1978; Milbrath 1984).

A second cluster of beliefs portrayed technology as out of our control. Both samples strongly agreed that “We are being involved less and less in important decisions that shape our lives,” and “We are in danger of letting technology run away with us.” Many implicated government in this lack of control, disagreeing that “We can trust government to protect the public health and safety.” There was similar suspicion about the likely benefits of science and technology. 3

Our survey responses confirm previous research. Sperling (1988) found widespread environmental values among animal rights protesters. Ladd, Hood, and Van Liere (1983) and

3. There was less agreement on the proper role of government in promoting or regulating animal research or nuclear energy. In each sample some believed the state to be as harmful as private interests, while others looked to state regulations as a solution.
Scaminaci and Dunlap (1986) saw similar values and beliefs in the anti-nuclear movement. In addition, studies have found that these clusters of beliefs distinguish environmental activists from the general public, as well as from business and labor leaders (Cotgrove 1982; Dunlap and Van Liere 1978; Milbrath 1984). There seem to be common values and beliefs behind many recent protest movements—especially those linked to environmentalism—that distinguish participants, on average, from other segments of the population, even though not everyone holding these values becomes active.

These beliefs and fears appear in the literature from both movements, as leaders design visual and verbal rhetoric to appeal to this anti-instrumental theme. Cartoons and editorials from the Abalone Alliance newsletter, *It’s About Times*, reinforce themes of a technology out of human control, the destruction of the natural world, and a government in complicity. Most newsletter covers had cartoons depicting nuclear technology as a grotesque giant, evil devil, rampaging Tyrannosaurus, or glowing, fiery skeleton. Humans are shown as dead or dying, often crushed in huge, skeletal hands. The federal government is sometimes shown as an android composed of nuclear missiles, or as Gestapo-like agents. Violence, force, and environmental catastrophe appear in the animal rights literature as well. Patrice Greanville, writing in *The Animals’ Agenda*, explicitly linked animal rights to broader environmental issues, “For no other cause surpasses political ecology in its affinity with animal liberation” (1988b:36). Greanville uses language such as “impending catastrophe” (1988b:37) and “underlying exploitative logic based on force, not consent” (1988a:36). Rather than focusing on a big, ugly industry like nuclear energy, animal activists emphasize the victims, with pictures of cute, furry animals in nooses, cages, and traps. The animal rights movement portrays agencies that fund biomedical research, such as the National Institutes of Health and the National Institute on Drug Abuse, as villains.

Both movements paint technocracy as the enemy: large bureaucracies, driven by profits or careerism, insensitive to human needs, wielding complex technologies beyond human control. Both desire moral standards and political control over instrumental techniques and rationalities. Because fears and suspicions of large organizations are widespread in U.S. society, movement leaders can plausibly and successfully appeal to them. These themes also can be found in many conservative movements, such as the anti-abortion movement. But the
master frames that convert anti-instrumentalism into a critique of capitalism are probably peculiar to left-leaning movements.

**Condensing Symbols and Recruitment**

What frames and master frames have been constructed on anti-instrumental themes? Why are some images of animals powerful condensing symbols, capable of shocking many who encounter them? In every society humans have projected their concerns onto animals, sometimes using animals as symbols of what is non-human (e.g., nature versus culture) and sometimes of what is human (humans are called pigs, dogs, chicks, and worse) (Thomas 1983; Ritvo 1987; Jasper and Nelkin 1992). In all societies, animals are repositories for cultural meanings, from embodiments of the sacred in early cave paintings, to images of social order in Mandeville’s (1924) bees, to fears of the wild in medieval images of wolves. Animals have enormous potential as condensing symbols.

The meanings of animals have changed in modern societies, and we can identify broader social changes that have formed the plausibility structures behind animal rights activism. Most societies in history have had a dual attitude toward animals: They kept some as pets, forming emotional bonds with them; but they used others as resources, eating them, wearing them, and using them in farming. Only with urbanization and industrialization was this balance upset, so that today most people in the advanced industrial societies encounter animals only as pets (Serpell 1986). The “civilizing process” through which we have enclosed our nuclear families in private homes and heightened our emotional attachments to family members (Elias 1978; Aries 1962; Tuan 1982) has included pets. Since World War II, further, advances in science have increased popular appreciation for the cognitive capacities of many animals. People have become more likely to see animals as “like humans,” capable of similar feelings and thoughts. Jasper and Nelkin (1992) dub this “sentimental anthropomorphism” because it combines a projection (accurate or not) of human traits onto animals, and an emotional valuation of animals for their own sake rather than as economic resources. Based on this theme — elaborated into a master frame — that humans and other species are quite similar, animals can become condensing symbols for a range of human emotions, feelings, and reactions. Organizers know that a photo of a caged puppy may trigger reactions like those to a caged child, and they have elaborated a “suffering of innocents” master frame.4

In contemporary societies, people who live with pets but not other humans seem most likely to bring animals into their own emotional circle (Sperling 1988). Claims about the capacities and rights of animals will be plausible to them, and images of the suffering of animals will be especially shocking (Jasper and Nelkin 1992). As we saw, animal rights protestors were more likely than the average American to have pets, and less likely to be living with other humans. Their plausibility structures should make them susceptible to the condensing symbols wielded by animal rights organizers, including a positive “one of the family” or “one of us” master frame.

Because we think we “know” the feelings of animals, we do not have to be told if an animal in a photograph is happy or unhappy. We believe the evidence to be clear and direct. The visual images used in animal rights recruitment have a simple but effective structure based on good versus evil. There are pictures of happy animals, sometimes in the wild and sometimes in loving homes, living fulfilled lives. Then there are the “innocent suffering” pictures: stabbed bulls; starved dogs; clubbed baby seals; experimental cats with electrodes

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4. Activists purvey a “suffering of innocents” frame in order to argue for animal rights—a significant logical leap, since rights are not the only basis for reducing suffering. A “rights” frame (usually found in philosophical arguments rather than visual images) can focus on the indignities as well as the physical suffering of animals exploited by humans. It might also examine the injustice of pet-owning, a practice the “suffering” frame would favor.
implanted in their skulls; terrified, caged monkeys and apes: test rabbits with inflamed, pus-filled eyes. These are presented as innocent victims of an evil force. The contrast between the happy and the victimized animals is carefully orchestrated in movement literature. Animal rights activists deploy photos of animals suggestive of human babies: large eyes, large heads, “cuteness.” Animals that whimper or cry, spill red blood, and have fur all arouse sympathy because it is easier to anthropomorphize them (Burghardt and Herzog 1980). They are “like us,” even when they have their own families instead of being part of a human family. They can be framed in “family” settings, either happy or disrupted: mother seals next to the carcasses of their babies; baby monkeys stripped from their mothers; baby elephants dying without their parents.

Animal rights protestors testify to the importance of such visual images in drawing them into the movement, explicitly describing the moral shocks that first grabbed their attention. “I had never thought about it much,” said one New Jersey activist,

But I went by a table one day and saw these terrifying pictures. That’s what goes on inside our country’s best, most scientific labs? There was a tabby [cat] that looked just like mine, but instead of a skull it had some kind of electrodes planted in its head. I thought about that a little bit, right there on the street, and I brought home all their literature. I decided, that’s gotta stop (personal interview, May 1990).

Others report similar epiphanies upon receiving movement literature in the mail or picking it up at pet adoption clinics. In contrast, Diablo participants, when interviewed in depth, spoke of rallies and other events—which they often attended with friends—as the triggers for their activism.

Some Americans are less open to this personifying of animals because their worldview—based on cultural themes in the Judaeo-Christian tradition—treats animals as explicitly subordinate to humans, available for our purposes. Fundamentalist readings of the Book of Genesis give humans “dominion” over the rest of the world, which is apparently to be used to satisfy human needs. Those who believe in creationism rather than evolution more easily reject the common origins and other similarities between humans and nonhuman species. One result is the large percentage of animal rights protestors who claim to be atheists and agnostics, who presumably are more open to frames and master frames implying greater equality between species.

We can only speculate on why women are more likely to have plausibility structures amenable to animal rights messages. Despite their increasing integration into the workforce, they still devote more time than men to the nurturing activities of childrearing, opening them to appeals portraying animals as innocent victims in need of protection. Ruddick (1989) argues that women’s disproportionate role in childrearing gives them a greater degree of “maternal thinking” and abhorrence of violence than men, one reason they were more likely to participate in the peace movement. The same argument would hold for animal protection, given the overlap between the animal rights and peace movements. Indeed, the causal impact might be stronger, due to the symbolic similarities between animal protection and child protection. Even though many of our female respondents were not mothers, traditional gender socialization is encouraged through other cultural channels. In addition, women are less likely to participate in activities in which animals are resources, such as hunting, slaughtering, and racing. Finally, animal rights groups such as Feminists for Animal Rights work explicitly to align the master frames of feminism and animal liberation, with some success (Adams 1990).

Finally, animal rights appeals are framed in left-liberal terms: Large corporations abuse animals in their reckless search for profits; consumer culture encourages testing on rabbits in order to invent “one more shade of mascara;” agribusiness deploys ruthless technologies that intensify the suffering of farm animals. Arguments are couched in ways that appeal to those who respond to cultural themes or master frames of capitalist markets as sinister. Organizers
Recruiting Strangers and Friends

appealed to left-liberal values that potential recruits already had, perhaps developed through prior political experiences.

Demographics and political beliefs help explain why the appeals of animal rights organizers resonate with the people they do, regardless of pre-existing personal contacts. Those who have special emotional attachments to their pets, live in urban and suburban areas, lack traditional religious worldviews, and are left-liberal may have a special receptivity to the condensing symbols used by organizers. Not all, certainly, will become activists or supporters. But there is an opening for recruiting strangers.

Condensing symbols were used in anti-nuclear recruitment, but less prominently. Much recruitment took place through discussions among friends. Said one anti-Diablo activist:

I was still more interested in revolution, and nuclear energy seemed a bullshit reformist issue, like environmentalism. But friends convinced me I was wrong, that the issue was capitalism and militarism and social justice. But it wasn't easy (personal interview, August 1984).

Friends can take the time to persuade, whereas moral shocks need effective condensing symbols. Both mechanisms involve frame alignments, but the mix of emotional condensing symbols and explicit argumentation differs.

The existence of strong personal networks in anti-nuclear mobilization does not mean that condensing symbols were unnecessary. They helped to attract new recruits to the network and to maintain the emotional allegiance of those in the subculture (Jasper forthcoming). After all, condensing symbols carry an emotional charge that is important for motivational as well as diagnostic framing. Thanks to assiduous efforts by anti-nuclear activists, nuclear reactors are now effective negative symbols for many Americans, due in part to the familiar cooling towers usually attached. Various associations are possible. One is the "man-madeness" of the plants, particularly offensive for sites on beautiful or pristine coastlines and rivers. Another is the radiation they contain, which might in turn connote nuclear weapons (Guedeney and Mendel 1973; Weart 1988). Their man-madeness and their radiation together connote themes of unnecessary technological complexity, of technology and experts out of control. Reactors might be associated with economic growth as a social imperative, or a utility company's search for profits.

The symbolic associations of reactors and cooling towers are not as direct as those of animals. Only after the 1979 TMI accident did anti-nuclear groups have a powerful symbol, and the media accepted the "technology out of control" frame implied (Gamson and Modigliani 1989, break this into two closely related frames: "runaway" and "devil's bargain"). TMI became a potent symbol because the direct-action wing of the anti-nuclear movement was already in full swing at the time of the accident. (See Jasper 1988, on the different way that TMI was framed in France, where anti-nuclear groups had disappeared by 1979.)

The anti-nuclear movement never developed direct-mail campaigns as extensive as those of the animal rights movement, so that the connotations of reactors did not need to be "condensed" so succinctly for the broader public. California anti-nuclear protestors joined primarily because of their personal and political networks. Less diagnostic framing was necessary, since they already shared many underlying beliefs and frames with the organizers, but prescriptive framing and exhortation to action were still needed. The cartoons of It's About Times would not impress strangers who did not already share the cartoonist's frame; they are better at motivational framing, implying the urgency of the issue. The photos in It's About Times tend to be of demonstrations, reinforcing existing solidarity: the news, too, was most often of movement events. In contrast. the photos common in animal rights literature and placards are more clearly designed to persuade strangers (especially since certain famous photos are repeated often on posters and brochures). Photographs present an aura that "this is the way it is," and these particular ones are well chosen to shock. Sontag (1977:23) says that photos give us an illusion of unmediated reality: "Photography implies that we know about the world if we accept it as the camera records it."
The "suffering of innocent animals" master frame of the animal rights movement and the "technology out of control" master frame of the anti-nuclear movement both depend on an anti-instrumental theme. Animal rights activists focus on the suffering of animals in the hands of scientists, lab technicians, and large corporations, and they ignore the suffering of animals in the wild. For anti-nuclear activists, a technology was created by arrogant experts that never should have been developed, a Frankenstein that the experts cannot control. Expert control is a dangerous thing in the eyes of both movements, which demand moral accountability.

Only certain Americans have the left-leaning political values, age structure, and relatively high levels of education that we found in our samples. These traits have some affinity with the anti-instrumental and environmental themes we found. But we can say more about the plausibility structures, especially of animal rights activists, than this, linking them to the frames organizers used. On the basis of the same cultural themes, the two movements constructed different frames. Resonance with existing cultural meanings helps explain any kind of movement recruitment, but especially the recruitment of strangers. Condensing symbols may tap into different versions of the same cultural themes: Furry animals and concrete cooling towers may appeal to different people, but both rely on a critique of instrumentalism. It is these themes (which can be traced to plausibility structures) that explain the resonance of master frames, frames, and condensing symbols.

Conclusions

Different mechanisms work to recruit strangers (through moral shocks and cultural meanings) and friends (through proximity, affective bonds, and cultural meanings). We believe that most organizers will try to recruit friends if social networks are available to them. They are less likely to be available to movements that pursue relatively new issues, that help to launch new cycles of protest, that pioneer new frames or master frames, or whose leaders do not have extensive prior political experience.

In our cases, the stage of the protest cycle was unimportant, nor did the ages of the groups themselves matter. At the time of our survey in 1984, the Abalone Alliance was five years old, and the direct-action anti-nuclear movement was eight. By 1988 TSU was seven, its New York chapter about five, and the animal rights movement itself about eight years old. So movement or group age does not explain the different recruitment patterns. It is possible that the Abalone Alliance arose at the end of a cycle of protest activity, with a variety of movements that had created political networks that the Alliance could use. Yet the animal rights movement arose during the early 1980s, the time of the peace mobilization, possibly the largest U.S. movement in recent history. Animal rights organizers were unable to tap into these other networks, based on the interpretive novelty of their concerns and their own inexperience. The problem was not the absence of any political networks, but of symbolically connected ones.

The animal rights and direct-action anti-nuclear movements differed as a result of their recruitment patterns. The use of condensing symbols without social networks may mean, for example, that a movement is more likely to employ extreme moralistic appeals that demonize its opponents. It may be more likely to rely on professionals or highly motivated bands to do much of its work, as with animal rights activists who break into labs. In contrast, to the extent that movement organizers can tap into an active subculture of politically involved citizens, they can rely on earlier framing activity, concentrating less on diagnostic and more on prognostic and motivational framing. They have correspondingly less need of moral shocks administered to the public. Perhaps leaders bear less of the initial organizing costs.
Cultural meanings are central in both forms of recruitment. There is a constant interplay between meanings out there, which for practical purposes individual organizers and ideologists must take as given, and more local meanings that these activists shape and redirect. Imaginative tropes and images can work their way back to shift the deeper understandings of master frames, even themes. But images that are too imaginative, losing contact with the existing meanings, will influence no one. Moral shocks, condensing symbols, and other cultural devices need to be studied in more detail as key ingredients in movement recruitment. We have only suggested ways that they operate. Cultural meanings and moral shocks may be especially important as a substitute when social networks are missing. More generally, the role of beliefs, symbols, and ideas in protest movements needs to be rethought. Prominent in the older collective behavior tradition, these were frequently lost in the resource mobilization approach. The mental life of social movements can be regained without the pejorative psychology that limited earlier work. An appreciation of cultural meanings can allow us to see protesters as reasonable and purposive, even when they do not pursue their own self-interest in a calculated way. Frames and themes are a good start on an improved cognitive and social psychology for research in social movements.

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