**Chapter 14: Architects of Change: Reconstructing Society**

Discussion Questions:

1. How do these articles portray the role of ideology?
2. How are roles within social movements linked to identity?
3. Categorize the movements discussed in each article as either a reform movement, revolutionary movement, or countermovement. For each, explain how you decided on which was the more accurate classification.

Amy Blackstone

Doing Good, Being Good, and the Social Construction of Compassion

*Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *February 2009; vol. 38, 1: pp. 85-116.*

<http://jce.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/38/1/85?ijkey=rgaz.TmheWxmw&keytype=ref&siteid=spjce>

**Abstract:**

Activists and volunteers in the United States face the dilemma of having to negotiate the ideals of American individualism with their own acts of compassion. In this article, I consider how activists and volunteers socially construct compassion. Data from ethnographic research in the breast cancer and antirape movements are analyzed. The processes through which compassion is constructed are revealed in participants' actions and in their identities. It is through their actions (or “doing good”) and their perceptions and presentations of themselves (“being good”) that participants construct compassion as a gendered phenomenon. Together, the processes of doing good and being good raise questions about the extent to which participants' acts of compassion are or can be transformative in a way that promotes the social change which activists and volunteers seek.

Scott A Hunt & Robert D Benford

Identity Talk in the Peace and Justice Movement

Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, Vol. 22, No. 4, 488-517 (1994)

<http://jce.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/22/4/488?ijkey=Nhlg6wTCo7UA6&keytype=ref&siteid=spjce>

**Abstract:**

This article examines identity talk in several peace movement organizations from 1982 to 1991. Identity talk directs attention to how identity discourse concretizes activists' perceptions of social movement dramas, demonstrates personal identity, reconstructs individuals' biographies, imputes group identities, and aligns personal and collective identities. Six types of identity talk are identified and illustrated: associational declarations, disillusionment anecdotes, atrocity tales, personal is political reports, guide narratives, and war stories. These stories revolve around the themes of becoming aware, active, committed, and weary. Suggestions are offered for possible future research.

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Rugh M Mann

Emotionality and Social Activism: A Case Study of a Community Development Effort to Establish a Shelter for Women in Ontario

Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, Vol. 31, No. 3, 251-284 (2002)

<http://jce.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/31/3/251?ijkey=aGyNEO8ndN7CY&keytype=ref&siteid=spjce>

**Abstract:**

This article addresses the dynamics and consequences of emotionality in social movement activity through a case study of a community development effort to establish a shelter for women in a small Ontario community in the early 1990s. From the perspective of involved actors, the shelter-building initiative took on "a life of its own," producing outcomes that contravened their goals and values, as community workers and as feminists. These included two eventualities that shelter activists were particularly anxious to avoid—an "us-against-them" vilification of a male "opposition" and the stigmatization of abused women as a "problem population." Theoretical work on the interplay of social structures, cultural repertoires, and the emotionality of the self provides insight into how and why such seemingly "irrational" processes evolve.

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Annette Linden & Bert Klandermans

Revolutionaries, Wanderers, Converts, and Compliants: Life Histories of Extreme Right Activists

Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, Vol. 36, No. 2, 184-201 (2007)

<http://jce.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/36/2/184?ijkey=8HemLnr/PNZBk&keytype=ref&siteid=spjce>

**Abstract:**

Life-history interviews were conducted with thirty-six extreme right activists in the Netherlands (1996-1998). Becoming an activist was a matter of continuity, of conversion, or of compliance. Continuity denotes life histories wherein movement membership and participation are a natural consequence of prior political socialization; conversion to trajectories wherein movement membership and participation are a break with the past; and compliance to when people enter activism, not owing to personal desires but because of circumstances they deemed were beyond their control. Stories of continuity in our interviews were either testimonies of lifetimes of commitment to extreme right politics (labeled revolutionaries) or lifelong journeys from one political shelter to the other by political wanderers (labeled converts). Activists who told us conversion stories, we labeled converts and those who told compliance stories, compliants. The article presents a prototypical example of each type of career and suggests each prototype to hold for different motivational dynamics.

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Jerry Harris & Carl Davidson

Obama: The New Contours of Power

Race & Class, Vol. 50, 1 – 19 (2009)

<http://rac.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/50/4/1?ijkey=Batx/vycKisa.&keytype=ref&siteid=sprac>

**Abstract:**

Barack Obama's election as US president marks a historic culturalshift in US political life, and is a major victory for progressiveforces. But what is the nature of the broad-based alliance thatplaced him in the White House, how was it forged and from whatdid it derive its strength? The global economic crisis has shockinglyexposed the bankruptcy of hitherto dominant and unfettered neoliberalismand opened the way for setting a genuinely progressive socialand economic agenda. This article analyses the challenges thatface the new administration and the balance of progressive forcesthat could make a profound and lasting difference to US society.

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Terry Leahy

Discussion of ‘Global Warming and Sociology’

Current Sociology, Vol. 56, 475 – 484 (2008)

<http://csi.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/56/3/475?ijkey=HsPW0MWWtFFmE&keytype=ref&siteid=spcsi>

**Abstract:**

Lever-Tracy has hit the nail on the head when she points tothe reluctance of sociologists to consider the social implicationsof global warming. Meanwhile the discussion of these issuesin other disciplines grows apace. Ecological modernizers seethe environmental crisis as a stimulus to capitalist societies,providing new opportunities for growth from re-tooling. Yet,sections of the environmentalist movement envisage necessarysocial change as much more profound. A key to this debate isthe likely costs of re-tooling. This technological and financialquestion is a prerequisite for understanding the social implications.If the costs of re-tooling are huge, as can be argued, somedrastic social changes are quite likely.

[Barry Checkoway](http://yas.sagepub.com/search?author1=Barry+Checkoway&sortspec=date&submit=Submit)

Education For Democracy by Young People in Community-Based Organizations

*Youth & Society September 2013 45: 389-403*

<http://yas.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/45/3/389?ijkey=GeX/Vtco0UVig&keytype=ref&siteid=spyas>**Abstract**:

At a time when many young Americans have reduced their civic engagement, and public schools have de-emphasized their civic mission, some youth are taking initiative at the community level, and some community-based organizations are establishing educational programs to promote their participation. These programs originate in economically disinvested and racially segregated areas whose young people require and receive “education for democracy” appropriate for their situation. This article provides perspectives on these programs, including their social purpose, curricular content, pedagogical methods, and implications for a new civics that contrasts with traditionalapproaches. It draws on analysis of educational efforts by organizations affiliated with a national project designed to increase youth participation in the South Bronx, Mississippi Delta, Albuquerque, East Oakland, and other areas.