The Ethnic Dimensions in Social Movements¹

Pamela Oliver
University of Wisconsin – Madison
Pamela.oliver@wisc.edu
orcid.org/0000-0001-7643-1008

ABSTRACT

This paper draws on work in the social construction of race and ethnicity to explain why race/ethnic divisions are so often axes of domination and why these divisions are central to social movements. Ethnic/racial groups are constructed in political processes that are intertwined with state formation and social movements. Processes of state formation and collective action create ethnic/racial groups, define majorities and minorities, and create racial/ethnic structures of domination. Physical and social segregation in tandem with intergenerational inheritance creates network cliquing that reinforces group boundaries, group differences, and group interests. Movements by members of dominant racial/ethnic majorities differ from movements by members of subordinate racial/ethnic minorities in key ways including access to democratic processes for achieving group goals, experience of repression, need for allies, identity construction, processes of consciousness raising, and bases of mobilization. The “ethnic dimensions” matter for all social movements.

INTRODUCTION AND PRELIMINARIES

This paper argues that race/ethnicity is a central aspect of social movements and that movement processes differ based on their racial/ethnic character. It builds on Aldon Morris and Naomi Braine’s (2001) arguments that there are differences between movements by entrenched subordinate groups whose identities are externally imposed and movements by relatively privileged people pursuing “social responsibility” issues. It departs from and extends their arguments by developing a framework for explaining how race/ethnicity maps onto society differently from gender or other axes of domination and why this affects social movements. It also takes seriously the task of understanding movements by dominant majority groups, including hostile anti-minority movements as well “social responsibility” and “ally” movements.² It also speaks to challenges like that those of Glenn Bracey (2016), who criticizes political process theory for analyzing the Civil Rights Movement without a theory of race.

Scholars of the social construction of race emphasize the ways political processes and social movements create ethnic groups and identities and describe the different ways these groups and identities relate to each other and the state. These general processes of group formation and identity construction happen in all social movements. At the same time, the ethnic character of a movement is always important in ways that “mainstream” studies of social

movements have often neglected. White movements in the US have often been theorized in ways that are blind to their Whiteness, while the importance of the minority-ness of movements peopled by minorities is often neglected.

Figure 1 outlines the core arguments of this paper. Ethnic state formation through invasion and conquest intertwines with ethnic movements in the co-creation of ethnic groups. Both dominant and subordinate groups act collectively to define themselves and others and seek resources or political power. These processes lead to ethnic majorities and minorities and to the ethnic/racial structures of domination that differentially allocate resources and power and shape social networks. Social networks and social movements shape ethnic/racial identities and consciousness which, in turn, feed into the persistence of intergenerational ethnic cultural differences.

The first part of this paper explains theoretically why race/ethnicity is central to structures of domination and social movements, emphasizing state formation and intergenerational networks. The second section develops an “ethnic” typology for social movements that distinguishes between majority and minority movements and discusses the important ways in which they differ, with an emphasis on US movements. The conclusion discusses the implications of this analysis.

RACE/ETHNICITY AS A SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED STRUCTURE OF DOMINATION AND CLEAVAGE

This paper assumes a social constructionist view of ethnicity, race, and nationality (Brubaker 2009, 2012; Omi and Winant 1986; Saperstein, Penner and Light 2013; Winant 2000) which, in turn, is tied to a broader literature on the social construction of groups and group boundaries (Bernstein 2005; Lamont and Molnár 2002). Race/ethnicity is always socially constructed and, in the United States and in many other countries, is also a structure of domination and a basis for social closure. Social constructions are neither optional nor superficial. As Morris and Braine (2001: 25) say, “social constructions themselves are products of power relations and historical forces, not neutral negotiations among individual or collective actors of equal social resources and standing” (2001: 25). Consistent with most work in the field, I use “ethnicity” as a general tag for a class of relationships that also encompasses race, nationality and other distinctions such as religion or caste or tribe or language group that may have similar properties.³ “Race” has a historical meaning that always encompasses domination and hierarchy, while “ethnicity” may not be hierarchical (Bonilla-Silva 1997, 1999; Omi and Winant 1986; Winant 2000). Empirically, in the US, “race” is the “ethnic dimension” that matters the most.⁴

STATES, MOVEMENTS AND ETHNICITIES

Ethnic majorities and minorities are products of a society’s history and formation and tied up with definitions of nation and citizenship. War, conquest, genocide, slavery, and legal exclusions create group differences and group hierarchies, while linguistic and cultural assimilation and political incorporation may create homogeneity out of prior diversity. States show the imprint of their origins in their ethnic constellation and are often the instrument of or biased toward one ethnic group over others (Olzak 2004). States may distribute resources and repression along ethnic lines, foster ethnic mobilization, and define ethnic groups (Alonso 1994;

Barkey and Parikh 1991; Enloe 1978, 1981; Loveman 1999). The colonial and post-colonial states throughout the Americas as well as other settler colonial states were constructed around European/White supremacy and continue to show these legacies in racial hierarchies, although in different ways in different countries (Bonilla-Silva 1999; Marx 1995, 1996). Elsewhere, nation-states and ethnic groups were constructed in many different ways in the wake of the dissolution of empires and subsequent migration (Brubaker 1995; Wimmer 2008, 2013a, b). Few societies are truly ethnically homogeneous, but societies vary greatly in the size of the largest ethnic group, the number and sizes of ethnic minorities, the degree of cultural difference among ethnic groups, and the extent to which there are substantial differences among ethnic groups in economic and political power.

Both between countries and within countries, ethnic groups vary greatly across a variety of dimensions of dominance. Sheer size always matters. In democratic contexts, electoral majorities can dictate to the rest of the society and larger minorities have more electoral sway than smaller minorities. Another dimension is control over resources, land, the means of production, and material wealth. Economic resources, political power, and control over coercive forces can create a mutually-reinforcing structure of domination. Groups that have economic power can use it to gain more economic power and to leverage political power. Tied to political and economic power is control over coercive forces.⁵

Political opportunities and the extent to which a state is democratic or open often varies for different ethnic groups within a country. Palestinian who are Israeli citizens experience a different state than Israeli Jews (Sa'di 2015). Athenian democracy coexisted with slavery. Democracy for White Americans coexisted with enslavement and then second-class citizenship of African-descent people, genocide and then colonial rule of the American Indians, and conquest and colonial rule over Northern Mexico, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Hawaii, and other Pacific and Caribbean island nations.

Scholars disagree about the best way to theorize the United States government. Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1986), who stress the role of social movements and “racial projects” in creating and maintaining racial structures, define the United States as a racial state in its institutions and practices, sometimes as pluralist arena in which Whites have disproportionate power and sometimes as an autonomous actor constructing race for its own purposes. Erich Steinman (2012) views the United States as structured by settler colonialism and argues that the multiple institutional spheres theory of social movements (Armstrong and Bernstein 2008) provides a framework for understanding resistance to settler colonialism by the Indian Sovereignty Movement. Moon-Kie Jung and Yaejoon Kwon (2013) argue that the United States is not best understood as a nation-state but rather as an empire state that was constructed by conquering and subordinating other groups into inherently hierarchical structures. Bracey (2015) argues for a Critical Race Theory view of the state as an instrument of Whites; in this view, Whites may sometimes yield certain benefits to minorities as part of inter-white struggles, but the state is inherently White and can take rights away from minorities without losing its core legitimacy for Whites.

All these theoretical views recognize the tyranny of the majority as the dark side of democracy for minorities. Democratic majorities have often voted to kill, displace, enslave, disenfranchise, or disadvantage ethnic or racial minorities. The existence of a White majority in the United States is a consequence of explicit immigration policies that encouraged European immigration while banning or limiting immigration from other areas and was intertwined with

the construction of racial categories and White fears of Blacks (Calavita 2007). White immigrants in turn gained and used control of local police to improve their own competitive economic position by repressing Blacks (Muller 2012; Olzak and Shanahan 2014). Overt hierarchies and structures of domination by race were embodied in government agencies and practices well into the 1960s, and the interests of the White majority were naturalized as “national interests” and “state interests.” Most institutions operate under assumptions and practices that automatically and invisibly privilege the majority, even without overt discrimination. White-dominated courts and legislatures have decided that “equal treatment” provisions designed to undo racial discrimination should be interpreted as requiring that inherited racial advantages must be allowed to persist. Police forces, even those staffed by minorities, are tasked with buffering the majority from the consequences of minority disadvantage.

Minority groups have never been passive victims of the White state. Before 1900, they fought wars, rebelled violently, and escaped when possible. Since 1900, US minorities have often mobilized to pressure for change, found ways to use the parts of the state that govern them, taken advantage of splits among Whites to seek allies for their interests, and have achieved victories and gained some power, including control over some local governments. In the post-Civil Rights era, there are government agencies and policies dedicated to advancing minority interests. Nevertheless, US minorities do not have final control over a single aspect of the national state and remain dependent upon White action. Even in the post-Civil Rights Era, the government of the United States remains under the control of the White majority, as do 49 of the 50 states within the US.⁶ The White majority still has the power to reverse prior victories, and has often done so.

Social movements are intertwined with racial/ethnic group formation. Group definitions and boundaries are the products not only of state actions, but of collective movements by both majorities and minorities including the Roma identity in the Czech and Slovak Republics (Vermeersch 2010), Chicano and Mexican American identities (Marquez 2001; Muñoz 1989) and deaf, gay and White nationalist as a minority identities (Berbrier 2002). Politicians target or stigmatize “others” to get votes. Activists work to raise group consciousness and increase network ties among group members. Movements often promote certain ways of acting and dressing as markers of a raised consciousness and may discourage out-group network ties as a way of promoting in-group solidarity. “Ethnic conflict” research is focused on identifying the factors that predict when protest or violence will occur along ethnic lines rather than others (Brubaker and Laitin 1998; Hechter and Okamoto 2001; Olzak 1985, 2004; Siroky and Hechter 2016; Williams 1994), generally finding that overt conflict is more likely to occur along ethnic lines when ethnic differences coincide with differences in economic class or political power.

As illustrated in figure 2, a key feature of the social construction of ethnicity in a hierarchical context is the dialectic of ascription and achievement, the ongoing interaction between externally-imposed boundaries and internally-asserted identities (Nagel 1994). Externally, groups are differentiated from one another and boundaries are defined through the mutually-reinforcing dimensions of structures of domination, network segregation, and maintenance of group difference across generations. Internally, group membership is reinforced through collective identities, a consciousness of difference, and group organization. The internal processes lead people to identify with the group, see their group membership as a salient individual characteristic, and have some willingness and ability to act in concert with other group

members. States and social movements are often involved in redefining racial/ethnic identities and boundaries and in encouraging individuals to embrace racial/ethnic collective identities.

Ethnicity matters even for movements that are not identified as “ethnic” and matters for movements that do not target the state, as well as for those that do. The ethnic character of states shapes the resources available to movements and level of repression they face. The ethnic character of the society shapes mass media and the cultural, discursive, and ideological contexts within which movements operate. “Public opinion” is the opinion of the ethnic majority and perceptions of moderate versus radical opinions are anchored in the opinions of the majority. Movements targeting non-state actors are just as affected by ethnic structures as those targeting states.

CULTURAL DOMINATION

Structures of domination also take cultural form. One is the ethnic definition of nation. While some nations define themselves in a multi-ethnic way, most do not. France is the nation of the French, Germany of the Germans. In the United States, the “nation of immigrants” is the White nation, the European settlers and their descendants. National discourses about American traditions of freedom and liberty erase the historical experiences of Black, Latino, and Asian people and of indigenous American Indians, Alaskans, Hawaiians, Guamanians and other Pacific Islanders. This definition of nation shapes identities and group definitions and is inscribed in institutions and practices. Education is conducted in English and schools are largely controlled by Whites who largely teach a curriculum that validates White supremacy. Mass media propagate images that replicate and reinforce social hierarchies. The interests and viewpoint of the White majority are naturalized as the “general” or “national” interest while the interests of racial/ethnic minorities are defined as “special” interests.

Cultural domination sometimes erases or blurs group differences. Language, cultural, or religious minorities may be required to adopt the language, religion, or cultural practices of the dominants. Sometimes this is part of a liberal or integrative strategy by dominants, intended to reduce minorities’ material subordination in exchange for their disappearance as a distinct group, as when White immigrants to the US were offered full citizenship in exchange for “Americanization.” In other cases, language or religious suppression is associated with military conquest and coercive control of one territory or group by another and is meant to reduce the capacity of subordinates to resist domination. Historical examples include forced conversions to Christianity or Islam; boarding schools for American Indian children; requiring Koreans under Japanese occupation to speak Japanese and take Japanese names. In these cases, group boundaries and identities remained despite forced cultural assimilation.

Cultural dominance also includes rituals of submission (e.g. bowing, stepping aside, averting eyes, avoiding confrontational language or disagreement) and other cultural practices that reinforce social definitions of groups as superior or inferior. These rituals often reinforce material domination through restrictions on daily life such as physical separation or ghettoization, exclusion from some occupations or activities or places, surveillance requirements, or enforced ignorance via bans on literacy or restrictions on education. Practices of cultural dominance can reinforce group boundaries, difference, and hierarchy.

Morris and Braine (2001) importantly argue that entrenched subordinate groups tend to have a strong sense of group consciousness, awareness of their subordination, and cultures with themes of resistance and critique (cultures of opposition) but often intertwine this with themes of

acceptance, resignation and fear (cultures of subordination). Thus consciousness-raising among the oppressed involves overcoming cultures of subordination while the cultures of opposition are usually already present. This is very different from the process of raising consciousness about an issue.

Absent from their discussion or most other social movement scholarship is recognition that majority ethnic groups also have cultures. Majority cultures tend to reinforce the habits of domination and privilege in which they expect others to submit, expect to be able to achieve their desires without opposition, and expect their identities and cultures to be positively affirmed. They begin collective action with assumptions of efficacy, entitlement, community support and even impunity. Some members of dominant groups, such as White nationalists, are actively motivated to defend their position against challengers. Others are blind to their position and accept privilege unthinkingly. The empirical predominance of White middle-class movements in the United States since the 1970s has shown up in repeated studies, but the cultural basis of this empirical prevalence is rarely noted.

INTERGENERATIONAL NETWORKS AND CLEAVAGE

“Are you surprised the culture around gay marriage has changed so quickly?” “I am. In 2004, when all those anti-gay marriage amendments passed and George Bush got reelected, I thought this will never happen in my lifetime. But we kept fighting. The secret weapon is, we’re randomly distributed throughout the population and in all families. If you don’t have a gay, lesbian, bi, trans in your immediate family, there’s probably one in your extended family. Definitely your extended family. That is our secret weapon, and that humanizes us. If African Americans were randomly distributed throughout the population and in every family, George Zimmerman would be in jail and so would that cop in Ferguson.” From an interview with Dan Savage (Davidoff 2014).

Ethnicity is inherently intergenerational and can be an axis of segregation and cleavage. As Dan Savage highlights, ethnic oppression tends to occur between families, while gender oppression tends to occur within families, or to cross-cut family lines. This affects the network structures that are central to social movements. Families and kinship networks are typically mono-ethnic⁷ and it is possible to have a closed self-reproducing mono-ethnic segregated community. Social scientists have long recognized the importance of marriage patterns as markers of class closure (e.g. Van Leeuwen, Maas and Miles 2005) and intermarriage is also a marker of ethnic group closure. Groups that are endogamous tend to persist over time and, conversely, endogamy is generally a precondition for maintaining sharp group boundaries over time.⁸ Intergenerationality is crucial for movement cultures and identities. Differential socialization of children can replicate group difference into the next generation and reinforce group boundaries. Children can grow up socialized into a movement identity and ideological world view. This is important both for creating real social ties that can foster collective identities and mobilization, and for creating high levels of common fate.

Ethnic divisions matter more if they coincide with other divisions and hierarchies, especially class. Social networks are a key link between ethnicity as a mere category and ethnicity as a social group with collective interests and collective identity. The network ties of kinship are amplified if they also coincide with the lines of residential or occupational

segregation. There are interests that derive from the relations people have with each other. The “social capital” concept recognizes that individuals are affected by the wealth or poverty and knowledge of the people they are socially connected to, not just their own. People who are not themselves on Medicaid or who themselves are not in prison may be related to those who are and may experience material consequences of what happens to their relatives (e.g. reduced burden of care or high costs of collect phone calls from prisons). The concept of economic multipliers recognizes that people benefit from having other people spend money in their community.

Relational or network effects are not just material. Individuals respond emotionally to crimes committed against people they know, to the grief and hardships of people they know. They form their perceptions of the circumstances of “typical” people from those around them. People also pay attention and react emotionally more to events that affect people they perceive as similar, especially when media portrayals activate those identities. Harris-Perry (2011) relates that Black people reported more distress about Hurricane Katrina than Whites, while Whites reported more distress about 9/11. These emotional and cognitive effects affect the group identities and perceptions of grievance that are central to much social movement theory. The clear bottom line is that predicting how a person views a given social issue requires knowing the characteristics of the people that person is linked to spatially or socially or by identification, not just their own personal circumstances.

A central question for the ethnic dimension of social movements is how segmented or cliqued the networks are. Groups that are socially and spatially isolated are more likely to have non-overlapping and cleaved interests rather than cross-cutting interests and are also more likely to develop the distinctive cultural practices that separate groups. Isolated groups and culturally distinct groups are more likely to marry within the group and thus to persist across generations. Groups that are endogamous across generations tend to become more physically and culturally distinct. Thus, ethnic network structures reinforce the interests, identities, and cultures that undergird social movements.

MAJORITIES AND MINORITIES: AN “ETHNIC” TYPOLOGY OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

This paper categorizes movements by whether they are peopled by members of the majority *ethnie*, by members of a minority *ethnie*, or are ethnically mixed. Within each ethnic type, we also consider group-focused versus issue-focused movements and the fit between a group’s collective identity and its empirical base. In defining ethnic majority and ethnic minority movements, the focus is on a movement’s empirical social base, the stratum or segment of society from which the participants in a movement are drawn. Morris and Braine (2001) call this the “movement carrier.” This is related to but is different from the “social movement community” concept as it is usually defined to refer to the loose network of activists a movement draws from (Buechler 1990). However, there are many common casual usages of the term “the community” that are closer to their idea of a movement carrier, as when people speak of “the Black community” or the “LGBTQQ community.”⁹

This builds on but differs from prior work. Morris and Braine (2001) distinguish three types of movements: liberation movements, with historically subordinate carriers aimed at overthrowing systems of domination; equality-based special issue movements that address issues that exclusively or disproportionately affect one group; and social responsibility movements that

challenge conditions affecting the general population. James Jasper (2008) distinguishes between “citizenship” movements of groups excluded from full political participation and “post-citizenship” movements of groups who are included in political systems. While both typologies point to differences between movements of oppressed groups and “issue” movements, neither classification recognizes group-focused movements arising from dominant groups, nor do they explicitly “race” the so-called “social responsibility” or “post-citizenship” movements that are empirically grounded in dominant majorities.

In a society such as the US in which “race” is naturalized and social systems are racialized so their normal operation replicates racial stratification (Bonilla-Silva 1997), it is meaningful to speak of majorities and minorities in a relatively fixed way. Even though ethnic boundaries and relations are continually constructed and reconstructed, racial hierarchies and majority-minority dynamics are persistent enough to profoundly shape social movement dynamics.

This paper’s focus on the “ethnic” dimension is not to deny the importance of gender or class or other axes of domination, but to highlight the importance of this one. All movements are either ethnically homogeneous or ethnically heterogeneous. All movements either have extensive network ties to the broader society, are insular and isolated, or are somewhere in between. All movements have greater or lesser access to sources of economic or political power. All movement discourses are either relatively central to or relatively peripheral to mainstream discourses. It is impossible to do good theorizing about social movements without theorizing their social bases. Unfortunately, too much theorizing has ignored these “ethnic” dimensions and has attempted to draw inferences about social movements in general from one type of movement.

Table 1 summarizes the ideal-type contrast between movements whose carriers are dominant majorities and movements whose carriers are subordinated minorities. The subsequent sections elaborate on these points for both group- and issue-focused movements and then also consider “mixed” movements.

ETHNIC MAJORITY MOVEMENTS

Ethnic majority movements are movements whose members are empirically overwhelmingly members of the ethnic majority.¹⁰ There are four broad types of ethnic majority movements: (1) group-focused movements promoting the interests of ethnic majority groups in overt opposition to ethnic minorities (e.g. US or European White supremacist or Indian Hindu nationalist movements); (2) group-focused movements promoting the interests of a group subordinated on a different axis of domination within the ethnic majority (e.g. gender or class movements); (3) issue-focused movements promoting issues that are framed as affecting society as a whole (e.g. peace, environmentalism, animal rights); and (4) group-focused ally movements promoting the interests of ethnic minorities. The last type is comparable to mixed-ethnicity groups for ethnic minorities, which will be discussed below.

As Table 1 implies, ethnic majority movements tend to be in the most advantageous position for mobilization. They draw on larger pools of potential participants and resources. They have the numbers to exert electoral influence or power. They are much less likely to be repressed and repression of them is more likely to generate anti-regime backlash. Ethnic majorities are more likely to be able to gain advantages from violent tactics without being violently repressed (Gamson 1975).

Group-focused majority movements. Group-focused majority movements are overtly hostile toward minorities and have explicit anti-minority ideologies. These appear in many multi-ethnic countries, are the subject of much of the “ethnic conflict” literature, and are typically the only type of majority movement that is racially marked by scholars. Hostile majority movements view minorities as threatening their safety, economic well-being, status, power, or cultural dominance. Hostile majority movements often arise when minorities have made advances or otherwise threaten majorities or their dominance and have played a major role in US history. Vernon Johnson and Elizabeth Frombgen (2009) argue that US nationalism became a White racial nationalism after the 1920s and that there is a relatively permanent racial cleavage about national identity since the 1960s. Since the 1960s, overt White supremacy has, at least theoretically, become a minority opinion among U.S. Whites, although observers have been commenting on a rise in overt White supremacist movements around the world for some time (e.g., Bonilla-Silva 2000).

Much research on hostile majority movements focuses on the relation between them and politicians’ rhetoric and broader public opinion among the majority. Vesta Weaver (2007) develops the “frontlash” concept to explain how White Southern political actors consciously responded to losses in the Civil Rights Movement by shifting the discursive terrain and successfully linking Black riots with Civil Rights protests and Black crime. Cameron McCarthy, Alicia P. Rodriguez, Ed Buendia, Shauib Meacham, Stephen David, Heriberto Godina, K.E. Supriya, and Carrie Wilson-Brown (1997) argue that racial identities are shaped more by popular culture than political movements. Kathleen Blee (2002) argues that extremist White racist groups recruit from the larger sentiment pool of “mild” White racism that is characteristic of much of the White population and then learn their extreme ideology within the groups while still leaving mainstream lives. Josh Adams and Vincent Roscigno (2005) examine the online discourse of white supremacist organizations, finding that nationalism, religion, and definitions of responsible citizenship are interwoven with more specific racial claims.

Several projects have identified the social contexts that White racist groups and the social consequences of their presence in communities (Blee and Creasap 2010; Cunningham and Phillips 2007; Van Dyke and Soule 2002). McVeigh (2004) emphasizes that White social isolation creates a structured ignorance that makes white supremacist worldviews logical and meaningful. This seems at least superficially seem to conflict with competition theory that emphasizes that violence arises primarily when and where social barriers and social closure break down (See Olzak 1992 and many other works by Susan Olzak and her colleagues.) There is substantial evidence that the advances of previously subordinated people are often met with resistance and counter-attack. One important line for future work is a more careful attempt to show the relations between network isolation effects and competition effects as bases for White anti-minority mobilization.

Blee (2017) argues that White supremacist groups are different from many other types of social movements in that they are often disorganized and chaotic, intertwined with criminal activity, recruit from prison gangs, put out images and stories as acts of terror in themselves, and foster “lone wolf” actors who are inspired by movement propaganda. Her arguments point to the need for more theorizing about how movements work.

Issue- and subgroup-focused majority movements. Majority movements addressing non-ethnic social cleavages such as gender, sexual orientation, or class or addressing “general” social issues such as the environment, peace, or morality are typically not marked as majority/White

and often have a shifting or mixed position with respect to minorities. In many cases, they see themselves as speaking for or to “society” or “all women” or “the working class,” encourage minorities to join them, and often express distress about the absence of minority participants. The processes of developing collective identities are different for ethnic majorities than for minorities. In line with the arguments of Morris and Braine, dominant ethnic majorities may not have an ethnic group consciousness, instead identifying themselves either with the nation as a whole or with some subgroup within the majority, such as their class or religion. Issue-focused majority movements and gender-focused movements are generally organized through organizations or institutions that provide a basis for network ties, rather than communities or families. For example, the structural bases for the women’s movement of the early 1970s were political organizations and employment, places where women gathered with other women. The structural bases for disability rights movements were organizations of caregivers and schools for the deaf were the structural basis for the deaf movement.

People typically become members of issue-focused majority movements by choice, not ascription, although some types of movements lodge within subcultures within the majority. Traditional working class movements, for example, were often grounded in residential communities. These instances of movements rooted within subcultures that have a residential base might be thought of as proto-ethnic, a possibility explored below.

Even when majority people are not hostile to minorities and would welcome them as allies, patterns of ethnic spatial and social segregation reinforced by group differences in economic resources create gulfs between groups in both their objective interests and their subjectively experienced realities. They may pursue policies that benefit them but hurt others, not out of hostility to others but out of genuine ignorance of the interests and conditions of life of other groups or unconscious internalization of hierarchies. Andrew Barlow (1991) argues that the White student movement of the 1960s wanted Black student activists to join their groups, but had little awareness of the backgrounds and experiences that shaped the Black students’ perspectives. Matthew Hughey (2015) compares White racist and anti-racist activists whose overt ideologies or frames are antagonistic but finds that their interactional scripts and identities as White men are very similar in that they see Whites as rational, intelligent, and objective, Blacks as dysfunctional, and racial differences as relatively immutable.

Group position and majority issue movements. It has often been the case that majority movements addressing non-ethnic issues have taken on an anti-minority agenda. Historical examples in the US include the [White] labor movement and the [White] women’s movement, which each had dominant factions in some eras that were virulently and even violently anti-minority. Populist movements often combine hostility to minorities with their antagonism toward elites. Seymour Lipset (1959) stressed that “authoritarian predispositions and ethnic prejudice” are more common among working class people (p. 482), but failed to mark his implicit assumption that “people” were White. Commentators today would also note that upper class or highly educated people often have class prejudice against lower class or uneducated people. Olzak (1989) shows that the mobilization of White unions went in tandem with anti-black conflict. Moral reform and religious movements also often associate immorality or religious error with minorities. Many studies focus on the ways putatively general social issues or concerns are racialized. This is especially clear with respect to crime control policies which disproportionately target minorities and are more supported in the US by Whites who are anti-minority (Staples 1975; Tonry 1995; Tonry and Melewski 2008; Unnever, Cullen and Jonson

2008; Weaver 2007). Felon disenfranchisement was promoted as an explicit way to maintain ethnic dominance (Behrens, Uggen and Manza 2003). Opinions about social welfare programs in the US are also highly racialized, with Whites who dislike minorities being more opposed; Faist (1995) finds that this is a growing pattern in Germany as well as in the US. Hughey (2014) summarizes White backlash politics in the past 25 years.

That majority movements that are not “about” ethnicity may take on an anti-minority agenda is empirically well established. Why this happens is less clear. One reason may be due to the structural fact that majorities inherently have less contact with minorities than minorities have with majorities (Blau 1977a, b), as long as there is even a partial tendency for like to associate with like, which contributes to ignorance and stereotyping about minorities and their interests and contributes to the processes of ethnic group construction and us-them dynamics that lead majority group members to view minorities as competitors or enemies rather than potential allies or co-occupants of the same societal boat. Rory McVeigh (2004) draws on Michael Schwartz’s (1976) ideas of structured ignorance and theories of bounded rationality and Blau’s (1977a) discussion of social structure as a multidimensional space of social positions to identify the conditions under which a white racist interpretation of the facts around a person can make sense.

Another reason may be that economic or political elites often fan ethnic conflict. Ethnic/racial labor conflicts in the US have generally been tied to employer practices of segregating workers by ethnicity and paying minorities less; majority workers have viewed minorities as direct competitors driving their wages down. Political elites competing for ethnic majority votes often promote fears of minorities as a vote-getting strategy. Another possibility is discursive. Benjamin McKean (2016) argues that populist us-them anti-elite rhetoric has the inherent danger that it homogenizes “us” and can thus readily be turned against outsiders. He provides examples of populist politicians who explicitly reject racist tendencies in their rhetoric, but stresses that this takes rhetorical “work.”

In short, ignoring the majority-ness of majority movements, even when they are nominally not anti-minority movements, puts severe limitations on understanding movement dynamics and outcomes.

ETHNIC MINORITY MOVEMENTS

Ethnic minority movements are movements that are led by and empirically have a majority of participants who are from one ethnic minority. (Mixed-minority movements are considered below.) These movements may have collective identities as minority movements, but they may not. They differ in whether they frame themselves as group-oriented.

Group-oriented minority movements. Group-oriented minority movements specifically advocate the advancement of the ethnic minority. Depending on their structural location and ideology, they may be civil rights movements seeking a change in their legal status, separatist movements seeking political autonomy, or cultural separatist movements. There are also “intersectional” movements that explicitly link ethnic subordination issues to another issue. Examples of intersectional movements include the environmental justice movement (Capek 1993; Checker 2004; Marquez 1998; Novotny 1995; Perrolle 1993) and the movement of women of color for reproductive rights (Cole and Luna 2010; Luna 2009, 2010, 2011) or the Black Lives Matter movement that focuses on police violence, but is linked to a broader Black movement agenda.

Ethnic minorities are usually politically disadvantaged and often economically disadvantaged. Even economically advantaged minorities often experience discrimination and even hostile and violent attacks by majorities. Sheer minority-ness typically gives a group little power in an electoral democracy, except when they are swing votes or occasionally in local areas where they are a majority. Ethnic minorities have often been politically disenfranchised and typically lack sufficient resources and political power to achieve their goals without allies from the majority group. The need for outside majority allies is one theoretically important way in which minority movements diverge from majority movements. For example, Benjamin Marquez (2003) showed how the dependence of Mexican American organizations on their funders constrained their goals and tactics. Minority movements may have global allies. Crystal Fleming and Aldon Morris (2015) talk about inter-movement effects of minority movements, e.g. the influence of Gandhi and Algerian liberation on the Black movement and the influence of the Black movement on other minority movements in the US. Joshua Bloom and Waldo Martin (2013) argue that international support as well as support from White leftists were critical to Black Panther strength in its heyday.

The historic patterns of racial domination lead social control systems to be implicitly organized around maintaining this domination and repression of challenging minority movements is likely to be ignored or even approved by the majority (Oliver 2008). For these reasons, minority movements are much more likely to experience coercive repression (Davenport, Soule and Armstrong 2011; Earl, McCarthy and Soule 2003; Rafail, Soule and McCarthy 2012). Christian Davenport (2005) shows that 1960s-1970s repression against a Black Nationalist group in Detroit targeted the neighborhoods where targets lived, not just the individual members.

As Morris and Braine argue, subordinate disadvantaged minorities have different processes for developing group consciousness than do majorities. Minorities are more likely to be embedded in networks that reinforce minority group identity through childhood socialization and adult network ties and cultural practices. Awareness of group identity and a sense of grievance and opposition are typically givens, but so are fear of the consequences of resistance and customs and rituals of subordination, acquiescence and compliance. Subordinated minorities may also internalize the dominant group's negative view of them and their culture, a phenomenon referred to as "internalized oppression." The development of oppositional consciousness often involves overcoming fear and internalized oppression and is different from the cognitive processes that teach majorities about issues.

Scholars have critiqued the majority-centric assumptions in social movement theory. Ahmad Sa'di (2015) critiques theories of means-end rationality and argues that groups facing overwhelming repression in a state that is not open to them may view resistance itself as a moral value, whether or not they have a chance of success. Bracey (2016) critiques Political Process theory for failing to incorporate Critical Race Theory into its model of the Black movement, thus adopting an assimilationist conception of race, where the only goal is inclusion into White realms, passing legislation constitutes real power for Blacks, treating Black radicalism and Black riots as a "decline in insurgency," and ignoring the ways in which White mobilization led the White state to reverse Black gains.

Issue-focused movements by minorities. Just as movements may be empirically dominated by ethnic majorities without the "issue" being ethnicity, movements may be empirically dominated by ethnic minorities without being framed as ethnic or having an ethnic

collective identity. There are many movements that define themselves as class-based or place-based movements that are empirically peopled by ethnic minorities. There are also movements by and for particularly oppressed groups of people who are disproportionately minority, such as felons or immigrants. Issue-focused groups that are “of” minorities often define themselves as “for” their ethnic group, making the group vs. issue distinction weaker for minority movements. The network structures arising from segregation create broader inter-movement linkages. For example, in comparing Black and White student activists of the 1960s, Barlow (1991) argues that Black students were much more connected to the Black movement and to their communities than White students. One consequence was that, as they aged, Black student activists experienced continuity in their relationships and political experiences, while White activists experienced discontinuity.

As discussed above, issues that disproportionately benefit minorities such as welfare or mass incarceration have often become “raced” as minority movements even when the activists in the movements are predominantly White. It is an open research question whether and under what conditions a movement that is peopled primarily by minorities can successfully frame itself as an unraced “general” movement. Movements that are empirically peopled by disadvantaged minorities have most of the characteristics of minority movements whether or not they frame their movement in ethnic terms. That is, they tend to be weaker in resources, have fewer social ties to the broader majority-dominant society, and are vulnerable to repression.

Analytically, the problems of minority movements are due to the hierarchical or vertical issues of subordination that make them resource-poor, small numbers and structural exclusions that give them low influence with the state. The sheer minority-ness of a minority group typically means that it requires allies to gain victories. This, in turn, forces minority movements to grapple with the problem of having to adapt their goals and strategies to gain allies and leads to internal dissent about whether and how to do this. This core problem foreshadows the matter of mixed majority-minority movements.

MIXED MAJORITY-MINORITY MOVEMENTS

People who are interested in an issue that transcends ethnicity do often try to recruit and organize across ethnic boundaries. Additionally, some members of dominant groups organize themselves in support of members of an oppressed group and movements whose goal is to promote the interest of a subordinate minority may include significant participation by members of the dominant majority. However, the ethnic hierarchies of society tend to make it difficult for such groups to persist and, when they do, they often experience internal conflict along ethnic lines of tension including privilege, hierarchy and power, cultural practices, and agendas.

Many mixed groups combine privileged volunteers or professional reformers from the dominant majority with less privileged members of the minority, such as groups addressing issues of mass incarceration. “Solidarity” groups made up entirely of members of the majority in support of a minority group have similar dynamics. Using examples including US civil rights, anti-slavery and Mexican American movements, Indian anti-untouchability and similar movements in Japan, South Africa, and England, Gary Marx and Michael Useem (1971) identify common problems that have arisen in movements for minorities when members of subordinate (insider) and dominant (outsider) groups try to work together. Outsiders have more resources and political power, which both makes them more effective and leads them to want to control the organization. Insiders are more radical in both their goals and tactics and are less

concerned with their relations to other movements. Cultural differences mirroring the larger society lead to conflicts about how to interact and run the organization. Liz Appel (2003) finds similar patterns in an analysis and critique of the white supremacist tendencies in leftist politics that arise despite good intentions. Donna Eder, Suzanne Staggenborg and Lori Sudderth (1995) describe racial divisions at a women's festival, as well as conflicts between lesbians and straight women. Dara Strolovitch (2002) examines the extent to which advocacy organizations represent their most disadvantaged constituencies and finds that mostly they do not.

Problems of privilege plague movements that seek to bridge the privileged and the disadvantaged. Some of these gaps are material and practical, including access to telephones, email, copiers, computers, cars, travel money, days off, and discretionary time. Some are tied to levels of education and knowledge. Some are tied to the unconscious internalization of social hierarchies (Hughey 2007). People from privileged backgrounds typically have habits of domination and skills of self-assurance and confidence in talking and writing, while people from disadvantaged backgrounds may have been trained in submission and have absorbed what Morris and Braine call "cultures of subordination." Privileged people are often uncomfortable when disadvantaged people are assertive, claim authority, or insist on their own way of doing things. These practical and interactional differences plague all groups that seek to work together across lines of privilege.

The privilege issues merge into the hierarchy and power issues. Privileged people typically have more access to outside sources of power and are more likely to be viewed as knowledgeable and objective by outsiders. The privileged are more often in control of an organization's purse strings due to being seen by funders as more legitimate, and they are more likely to be gate-keepers for jobs or benefits needed by less advantaged group members. Just as movements by majorities are less likely to be repressed than movements by minorities, the majority-group members of mixed groups are less likely to fear repression than minority-group members of the same group, who often have genuine reason to fear repression. These hierarchy and power issues are especially acute in professionalized organizations, or organizations with outside funding.

Even when issues of privilege and hierarchy are not acute, different ethnic groups may have difficulty working together because of cultural issues tied to the fact that network cliquing gives them different expectations about what it means to "do" collective action. This is obvious whenever groups speak different languages, but it comes up whenever people's background and experiences are markedly different. Groups from different networks may have had different experiences that give them radically different views of "reality." These different experiences lead to different group identities and different ways of talking about and framing issues. In addition, cultural groups vary in the practices that undergird collective action. They have different ways of holding discussions and structuring meetings and different understandings about the proper forms of action. One especially important difference is that ethnic groups vary markedly in the ways in which disagreement is expressed. In some ethnic groups, overt and challenging statements of disagreement and confrontational language are the norm, while in other ethnic groups, any overt expression of disagreement is taboo and all communications must be made under norms of ritual politeness and circumlocution. People from different backgrounds who are not aware of these cultural differences can infuriate each other in meetings and can find it nearly impossible to work together.

Finally, there are agenda issues when groups work together. People from different backgrounds will often have divergent goals. There can be internal conflicts over leadership, over the allocation of resources within a movement such as access to paid positions or dispersion of funds to different work groups. The mixing of beneficiary constituents (those who benefit directly from a movement) with conscience constituents (non-beneficiaries motivated by moral considerations) inevitably raises concerns about shared fate. Who will suffer the consequences if things go wrong? Are the conscience constituents in for the long haul, or will they leave when things go sour or they don't get their way?

It is logical for people who share an interest that crosses ethnic lines to want to work together around their common interests, and there have been mixed-ethnic women's movements, labor movements, neighborhood movements, environmental movements, and peace movements. But the same problems of cultural differences and hierarchies of privilege make genuine collaboration in such movements difficult to sustain without special attention to the problem. The constructs of reproductive justice as opposed to reproductive rights (Luna and Luker 2013; Luna 2010) arose from minority critiques of the reproductive rights movement, and the "environmental justice" frame arose from a criticism of White-dominated environmentalist groups. Lichterman (1995) showed how Black and White grass roots environmental groups with explicit multicultural goals but different cultural styles had trouble interacting.

Inter-ethnic cooperation is possible, but it takes direct effort. Elizabeth Cole and Zakiya Luna (2010) discuss examples of making interracial coalitions work around gender issues. The problem of interracial cooperation is often of central attention in studies of labor movements. Several studies argue that racial cooperation comes from directly addressing racial representation, rather than seeking to transcend race. Cliff Brown and John Brueggemann (1997) compare successful and unsuccessful cases of building interracial (Black-White) labor unions in US history, arguing that success required both more favorable economic relations and concrete strategies for incorporating Blacks. Joseph Gerteis (2007) compared unions in Atlanta and Richmond in the 1890s and found that Black-White labor solidarity was maintained in Richmond with racially segregated union assemblies and high residential segregation in the community.

MIXED MINORITY MOVEMENTS

Some movements are made up of multiple minorities. They arise in various ways. Some groups are dominated by one ethnicity but reach out to incorporate others, some are formed as coalitions between groups representing different ethnicities, and some are drawn from constituencies that are multi-ethnic. Mixed-minority movements often combine the dynamics of minority movements in terms of lacking political clout and needing outside allies to win with the cultural conflicts of mixed majority-minority movements. However, most multi-minority movements are formed around issues in which members are similar to each other, and the common sense of being ignored by the majority can be a basis of solidarity.

Some researchers have examined multi-ethnic movements. Jeannette Diaz Veizades and Edward Chang (1996) describe the conflicts that led to breakups of coalitions between Blacks and Koreans and Latinos and Blacks, including low resources, power struggles, and nationalist ideologies in the larger communities. Moon-Kie Jung (2006) describes how Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino workers in Hawai'i built strong multi-ethnic Communist unions by explicitly incorporating race/ethnicity into their representational structures.

Pan-ethnic movements are a particular kind of multi-ethnic movements. Major examples are the pan- American Indian (Cornell 1988; Nagel 1997) and pan- Asian American (Espiritu 1992; Okamoto 2003, 2014; Okamoto and Mora 2014) movements. American Indians have different governments, different languages, and different cultures but have the common experience of conquest and subordination. The material and cultural base for pan-Indian activism was partly grounded in the United States policies of forced cultural assimilation in the boarding schools and coerced urbanization, but even in the wake of renewed emphasis on tribal sovereignty and a resurgence of cultural distinctiveness, pan-Indianism is enacted in inter-tribal pow wows and pan-Indian and inter-tribal organizations addressing common issues. Most people in the Asian American racial category in the United States do not identify with it, and view the cultural and linguistic differences among Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Filipino, Laotian, Hmong, Indian, Pakistani, etc. people to be too great to be a basis of unity, but the external pressures of racialization and racial discrimination lead to the formation of coalitional pan-Asian groups and efforts by some movement activists to promote pan-Asian identities.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

“Ethnicity” matters for social movements when it is an axis of domination and resource allocation; when it is a network cliquing structure that affects shared fate within groups and conflicts of interest between them and that shapes communication networks and shared understandings; and when it is an intergenerational community that creates differential socialization into subcultures and distinct identities. Ethnicity in the broad sense is always an important dimension of movement analysis because ethnic group definitions and boundaries are always intertwined with state formation and state functioning. States are generally biased in favor of some ethnic groups and against others, and in many cases, ethnic categories (especially racial categories) are the bases for strong structures of domination. A movement’s relation to state and national self-definition matters even when a movement’s target is not the state. Movements targeting public opinion or economic elites or seeking to create separate institutions all operate within the institutions, power dynamics, and culture of the larger society.

Paying attention to the ethnic dimensions is important for all social movement theorizing and research. Every social movement has a specific ethnic configuration, as it also has a specific gender, class, regional configuration. A movement’s ethnic configuration affects every aspect of it. Political opportunities are never homogeneous but always vary for different ethnic groups. Network ties within a movement’s base and between the movement and the rest of the society are patterned by ethnicity and inevitably affect movement mobilization and movement impact. Movements that are based on intergenerationally-transmitted cultures and identities are different from those based on ideologies acquired as an adult. The processes of developing collective identities and oppositional consciousness are shaped by a movement’s ethnic configuration.

Table 1 lays out some ways that majority and minority movements may be expected to differ. Majority movements are more likely to have access to electoral power and strategies and more likely to control or have access to a broad range of institutions and are more able to field large demonstrative actions. Minority movements must find allies in other ethnic groups to achieve political outcomes and thus are more likely to need to negotiate coalitional politics and learn to frame their issues in ways that appeal to the majority. Minority groups may more often need to resort to disruptive strategies to force a complacent majority to pay attention. While minorities may control institutional niches, these niches are embedded in larger institutional and

political structures minorities do not control. Majorities typically control the means of coercion and are less likely to experience coercive repression unless their tactics are violent and they have been ideologically marginalized. Minorities are much more likely to be coercively repressed even when they are nonviolent and much more likely to be viewed as radical and extremist.

The emotional valence of majority and minority movements is often different with minority group members more likely to have emotions of fear or suppressed rage while majority movements are more likely to operate in a mood of task-oriented emotional neutrality or overt anger or a sense of empowerment.

Patterns of network isolation or integration influence the spread of ideas from initial dissidents to the larger society. The cultural practices and understandings of majority people are part of the taken-for-granted assumptions of the larger society and majority movements typically have many points of entry in entering public discourses. Minority movements typically have fewer points of entry and are may have more difficulty producing cultural resonance in their attempts to persuade. Movements of ethnic majorities are more likely to be able to diffuse their ideas throughout the larger society, while movements of ethnic minorities may be less able to diffuse ideas and broaden their base of support. In short, research that attends to a movement's ethnic configuration will draw better theoretical conclusions about how particular movement processes work.

Ironically, White sociologists often fall victim to the same blinders as majority movements do. The Whiteness of many US movements is often unremarked, unless they are White nationalist movements. Discussions of mobilization or tactics or framing or identity formation often seek to generalize from a majority experience without recognizing their limitations. Because movement scholars tend to study movements they have access to or have an affinity for, the underrepresentation of people from ethnic minorities among the ranks of movement scholars leads to an underrepresentation of case materials from ethnic minority movements. More ethnic diversity in the ranks of movement scholars would improve the generality and depth of the body of social movement research and theory.

Many movements seek to be nonracial or pan-ethnic and activists often express frustration at the unwillingness of people from other racial/ethnic groups to join their movement. Attention to the ethnic dimensions provides some analytic basis for understanding these difficulties that go beyond finger-pointing and blame. The very majority-ness of majority group members often makes them blind to cultural difference and privilege and their culture of domination may make them unwilling or unable to attend to the interests and perceptions of members. Conversely, network isolation and different universes of discourse can also lead minority group members to unintentionally alienate majority group members, or members of other minorities. Working across subcultural lines can be emotionally fraught and frustrating. Research that attends to the ethnic configuration of movement groups can identify practices that tend to repel potential participants or disrupt cooperation and practices that tend to facilitate inter-ethnic collaboration.

Attention to the ethnic dimensions will provide more theoretical basis for understanding the movement context of the present period. Groups that are relatively socially isolated from other groups tend both to have distinctive interests and to develop distinctive cultures and views of the world. Groups that are socially isolated and culturally distinct tend to misunderstand each other and view each other with suspicion or hostility. These differences are the social structural

underpinnings for movements and conflicts organized around ethnic/racial differences. Such movements may be movements by minorities challenging structures of domination, but they may also be movements by majorities seeking to impose structures of domination on other groups or violent genocidal or exclusionary movements seeking to eliminate other groups entirely.

Scholars who have studied racial movements in the US knew to expect a White backlash to the election of a Black president and then to the Black Lives Matter movement. Attention to the matter of networks and universes of discourse helps to explain how it could be that Black Lives Matter not only spread among Blacks but won growing attention and support from one group of White people while simultaneously activating the fears of another group of White people and increasing their support for White nationalist rhetoric and movements. Attention to networks and universes of discourse provides tools for understanding both the spread of anti-immigrant sentiment among many Whites and the difficulties facing immigrant groups as they seek to defend themselves and find allies. Immigrant communities typically have strong in-group ties and identities but struggle to pull in majority support and attention.

Race/ethnicity qua race/ethnicity is always important because ethnicity and race are intertwined with state formation giving all states have an ethnic character, because they are commonly associated with differential power and resources, and because they often form intergenerational subcultures and cliqued network structures. But viewing ethnic groups as relatively endogamous network cliques that are socially segregated and reproduce themselves across generations suggests new ways of analyzing the formation of other collective identities and social movements. There is a long sociological tradition of monitoring class endogamy as a marker of class formation. Class is more like ethnicity to the extent to which people of the same class intermarry and are socially segregated. Levels of residential segregation by economic level among people of the same racial group have been rising (Bischoff and Reardon 2013). What is less clear is how deeply these patterns of residential segregation map social segregation. For example, middle-class Blacks are much more likely than middle-class Whites to have poor relatives who made economic and personal demands on them and, conversely, poor Whites are more likely to have non-poor relatives who can offer them assistance (Pattillo 2013). A substantial body of research examines the “social capital,” i.e. resources available through network ties, of people of different classes and races. But we might also examine class politics through an “ethnic” lens that examines the extent to which class ideologies and identities have taken on an intergenerational ethnicity-like character.

We may extend this sociological vision further. Differences among European ethnic groups and the Protestant/Catholic divide were both important in the US in past generations, but these distinctions have largely disappeared as axes of hierarchy among Whites after the third or fourth generation since immigration. However, there appears to be a growing cultural-ideological cleavage and social-spatial segregation between conservative and liberal Whites that falls along religious and educational and residential lines. If these political/religious cleavages among Whites grow, and if White people tend to marry within these groups rather than across these groups, there is a sense in which political/religious groups could take on an “ethnic” character. It is already the case that many localities in the US are politically or religiously quite homogeneous. People are already creating distinct subcultures and universes of discourse that shape their political orientations and worldviews. Social movements are already drawing from these distinct movement carriers defined by politics and religion. There is already rhetoric about “attacks on Christianity” and anti-immigrant or anti-minority rhetoric that is contributing to

perceptions of group difference and group boundaries. One view is that this is evidence of a resurgence of White Evangelical Christian as a salient ethnic identity.

This analysis raises questions about the relation between communities and movements. To the extent that an axis of domination or support for an issue runs more between families rather than within families, we expect social movements to be more grounded in communities and community-like institutions, including churches. Conversely, to the extent that axes of domination or issues are like gender or age and vary as much within families as between them, we may expect social movements to be grounded more in secondary associations or workplaces. Further, we may expect that social movements that coincide with communities will be more likely to be tied to master identities and worldviews.

Finally, the analytic tools adapted from analyzing ethnic groups as intergenerational network cliques may provide a way to answer Andrew Walder's (2009) criticism that social movement theory has narrowed its focus to the problem of mobilization and ignored the problem of content. We know that people who seem to be in objectively the same material condition often embrace wildly different political and movement ideologies. We also know that non-economic factors, particularly religious affiliation and geographic location, are strong predictors of this divergence in opinions among Whites. Taking an "ethnic" view on this problem would pay attention to the extent to which people with different ideologies are inheriting their ideologies from family socialization and ideologically segregated and endogamous communities. This idea would connect with the discussion of the moral basis of moral reform in Wood and Hughes (1984), which stressed social factors correlated with socialization. This approach does not immediately answer the questions of movement content, but it does point toward a strategy for answering it. It says that we cannot expect to read movement content directly from an individual's personal circumstances, but from the larger network of affiliations in which people are embedded. These larger networks of affiliations affect what ideas they are exposed to and how they react to new ideas. People are making sense of the world they live in, but they do so in a socially-defined context in which some things are taken as unquestionably true or real and polarization develops when they are aware of others who are actively supporting different views.

To sum up, we find that starting with taking seriously the difference between ethnic majorities and ethnic minorities in their prospects for mobilization and seeking to identify the theoretical dimensions of ethnicity and how they influence social movements both points to the need to be much more explicit about the ethnic configuration of every social movement in theory and research but also points to new ways of looking at the core problems of meaning-making and the construction of movement identities.

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TABLES

Table 1 Ideal-type differences between dominant majority & subordinate minority movements

	Dominant Majority	Subordinate Minority
Electoral & political power	High, can achieve goals without other groups	Low, needs allies
Institutional Power	Usually high across a wide range of institutions	Usually low, may have specialized agencies
Coercive power	Usually high	Usually low
Economic Resources	Relatively high	Relatively low
Strategies	Electoral, demonstrative, power-asserting	Disruptive, persuasive
Repression	Unlikely unless small & violent	Likely even when nonviolent
Inter-Group Relations	Often isolated, unaware, indifferent; may be hostile-aggressive or sympathetic-patronizing	Must interact with majority; may be adaptive, challenging, fearful, ally-seeking
Identities	Latent, need to be developed. Often unmarked. Exception: White racist movements	Given, recognized from childhood, reinforced in daily life
Cultural connections to larger society	Generally high, many points of entry	Generally lower, misunderstanding common
Internal Culture	Habits of dominance, entitlement, cultural comfort.	Mixture of opposition and subordination; discomfort, bicultural
Consciousness raising	Education or motivation about issues or other groups	Overcome fear, sense of powerlessness
Networks Internal	Movement often organization based. Hostile majority supremacy may be community-based	Movements often community based

Networks external	Connected to larger society	Often isolated from larger of society
Frames	Their issues are “national” issues	Their issues are “special interests”

FIGURES

Figure 1 Sketch of Theoretical Argument

External Ethnic Dimensions

Internal Ethnic Dimensions

Figure 2 External and internal ethnic dimensions

NOTES

¹ This paper began as a wide-ranging and somewhat self-indulgent talk in 2012 at the University of Notre Dame at the occasion of my receiving the McCarthy award. In the intervening years, I have presented and revised the paper multiple times and have sought to clarify and strengthen the argument and anchor it more firmly in the academic literatures on social movements and the social construction of race, but I fear that, like states, it remains profoundly structured by its origins.

² Some of these ideas are also relevant to dominant minorities, but this paper does not explore those distinctions.

³ The literature on the social construction of race and ethnicity contains many nuances and debates about boundary-formation and the history of ethnic categories that cannot be addressed in this paper including the historical development of ethnic identities out of smaller place-oriented identities in the process of nation-formation, the differences between group's accounts of their origins and more objective histories, the ways racial classification schemes vary among the nations of the Americans and over time, and the active processes of group-making and boundary construction. See (Marx 1996), (Alonso 1994), (Olzak 2004) and (Saperstein et al. 2013) for reviews of these issues. Like age or income, ethnic or racial boundaries can be fluid and continuously variable and still have importance in a structure of domination.

⁴ Even though Hispanic is “officially” an ethnicity that cross-cuts race, in practice Hispanic is racialized: all Hispanics are lumped together as one group that is treated in parallel to the races White, Black, American Indian, and Asian, and most Americans and Hispanic/Latin@ persons think of Hispanic/Latin@ as a race. This paper is not engaging those nuances.

⁵ Minorities can sometimes use economic and coercive power to control a state, but this paper considers dominant numerical majorities only, as dominant minorities have different dynamics.

⁶ Hawai'i is majority Asian descent, although Whites remain the economic elite in Hawaii. Native Hawai'ians are a subordinate group in Hawai'i. Some local governments are minority-dominated, as are some government agencies.

⁷ A case can be made that immigrant communities are not mono-ethnic, as the children grow up in a different culture from their parents. American Indian children forcibly assimilated in boarding schools also had a different culture from their parents, as did the children born into slavery from parents captured in Africa. Despite these kinds of generational issues, ethnicities can have intergenerational cultures in a way that other kinds of groups cannot.

⁸ It is also possible to maintain an ethnic group with exogamy if the progeny of all “mixed” relationships are defined as group members, as in the “one drop rule” regarding the definition of Black in the US. These complexities are beyond the general point being made here about the general intergenerational character of ethnicity.

⁹ Related concepts are the older resource mobilization concepts of “beneficiaries” (the social group who are meant to benefit from a movement), the “constituency” (the group who feels

represented or spoken for by the movement), and the “adherents” (the people who agree with a movement).

¹⁰ How high a percentage is “overwhelming”? Certainly, if the group membership is 90% or more from the majority, it is a majority movement, and probably if its membership is 80% or more majority.