

# Class 6: Aspects of Social Movement Activity

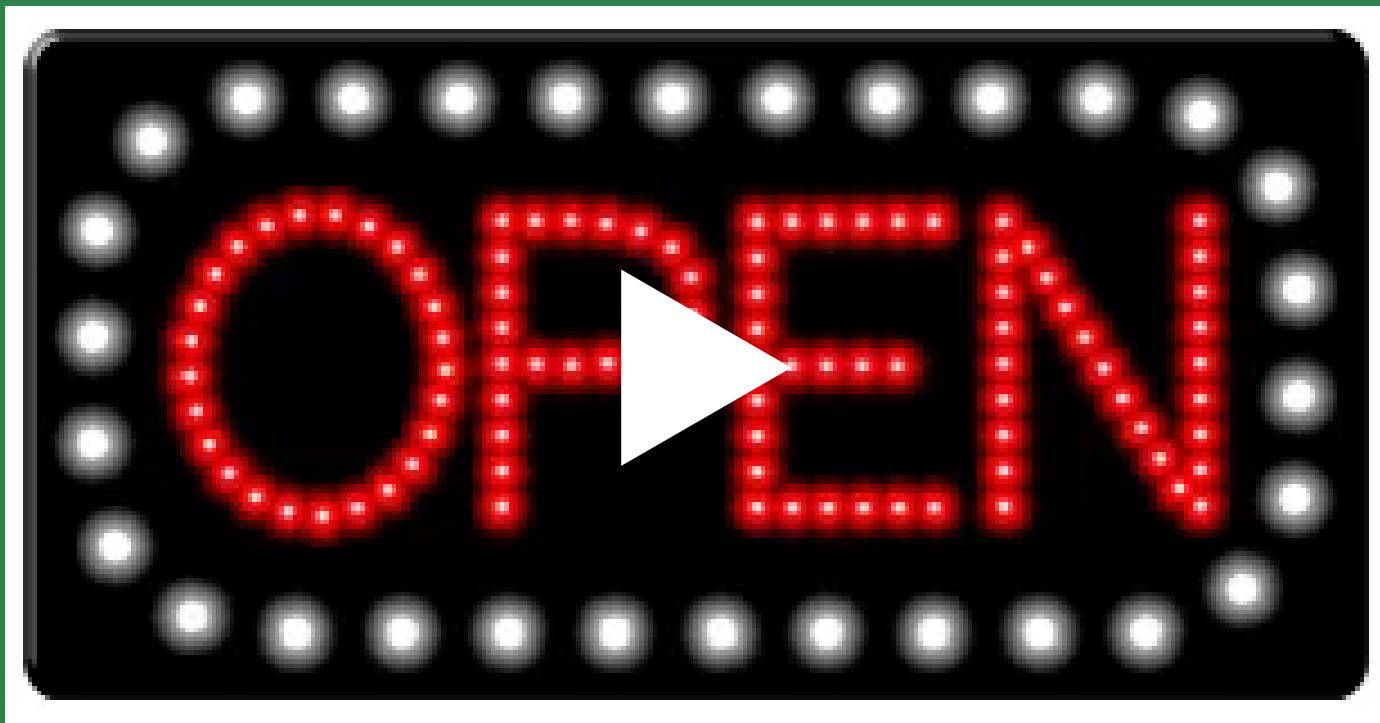
Organisation, strategies and tactics

Dr. Michael C. Zeller

# Agenda for the day

- Opening notes
- A conceptual framework of *strategy*
- Poll: strategy formation and effect
- Temporality
- Tactics and effecting change
- Any questions, concerns, feedback for this class?

# Opening notes



# Presentation groups

## Presentations line-up

Date	Presenters	Method
4 Dec:	Daichi, Seongyeon, Jehyun	TBD
18 Dec:	Ayla, Tara, Theresa, Annabelle	TBD
15 Jan:	Luna, Emilene, Raffa, Sofia	TBD

# A conceptual framework of *strategy*

- strategy defined
- elements of strategy
- drivers of strategy selection
- example from a non-violent but disruptive group
- example from a violent group



# Basic, intuitive definition of *strategy*

strategy refers to the approach of an actor(s) to achieve their (political) objectives—connecting actions to goals (*means to an end*)

- extant definitions identify some elements, e.g.,
  - “a combination of a claim (or demand), a tactic, and a site (or venue)” (Meyer 2007, 82)
  - Ganz (2010, 9): targeting, tactics, timing
- many groups use mixed strategies of violence and non-violence

# Elements of strategy

- informative element: **objective(s)** (*why*): what are the actor(s) goals? **minimalist** vs. **maximalist** objectives
- **target** (*what/who*) - what entity is being acted upon?
  - involves choice to commit resources to specific outcomes
- **tactics** (*how*) - types of collective action and their form
  - attempt to deploy *strengths*, exploit target's *weaknesses*
- **site/venue** (*where*) - what place or what forum type is action taken?

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- **site/venue** (*where*) - what place or what forum type is action taken?
- **timing** (*when*) - when are tactics employed against targets

**What are the strategic elements of social movements that you know of?**

# Drivers of strategy selection

- **strategy** is be a product of (rational) choice

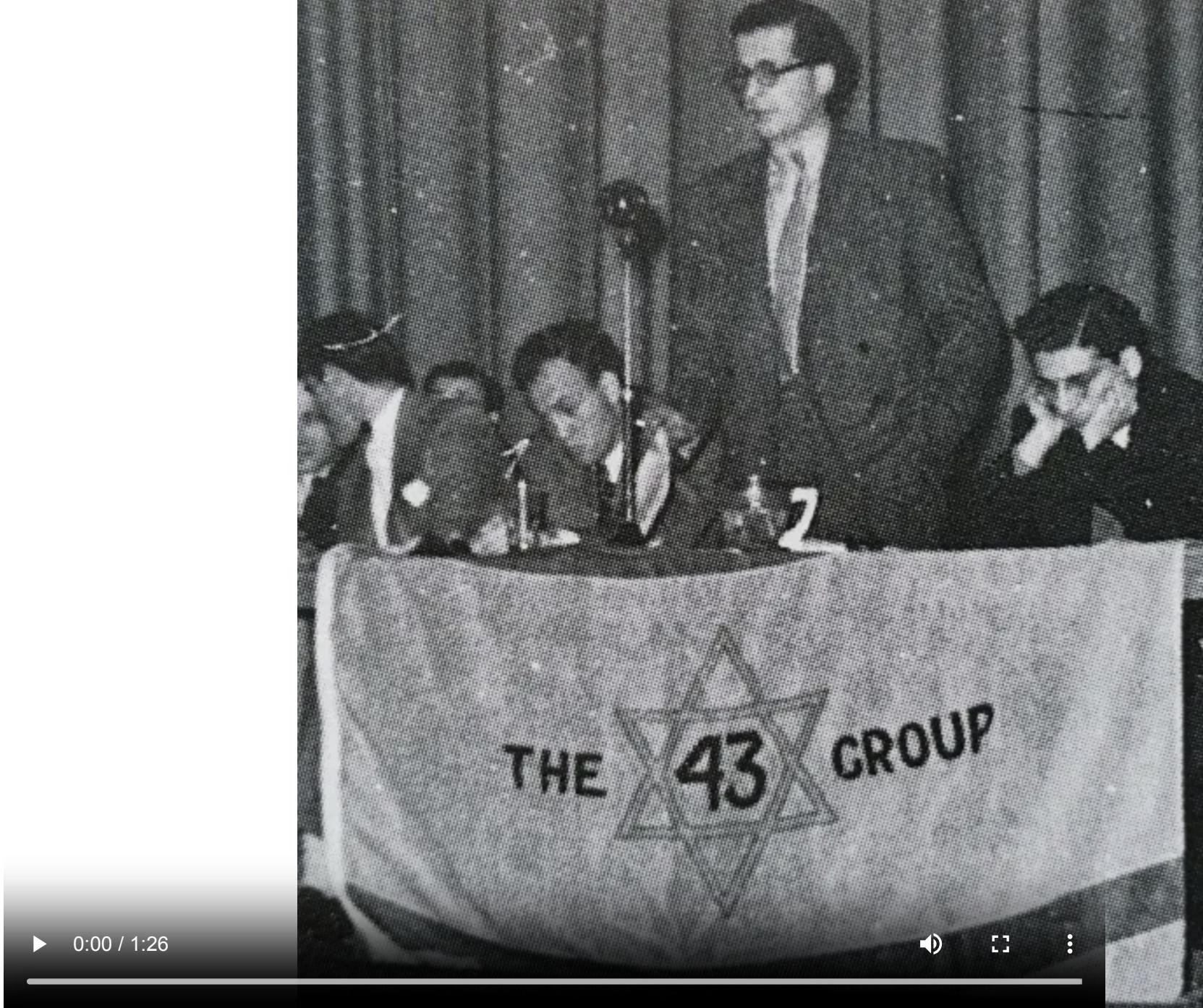
BUT...

- it is also a part **collective identity** (cf. Polletta and Jasper 2001)
  - strategy also involves *moral and emotional commitments*

# An example from the news...

How can we characterise the group's *strategy* here?

# An example from 'the 43 Group'



# An example from 'the 43 Group'

post-war Labour government, witnessing low-level fascist-party organising and agitation...

Beckman (2013):

On Tuesday May 21st [1946], [James] Chuter Ede, the Home Secretary, received a deputation from the JDC [Jewish Defence Committee, part of the Board of Deputies of British Jews] led by the Chairman, Gordon Liverman ... They listened to the deputation and said they would consider all the points raised, but nothing tangible happened.

documentary about 43 Group: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBusQBSCAHY>

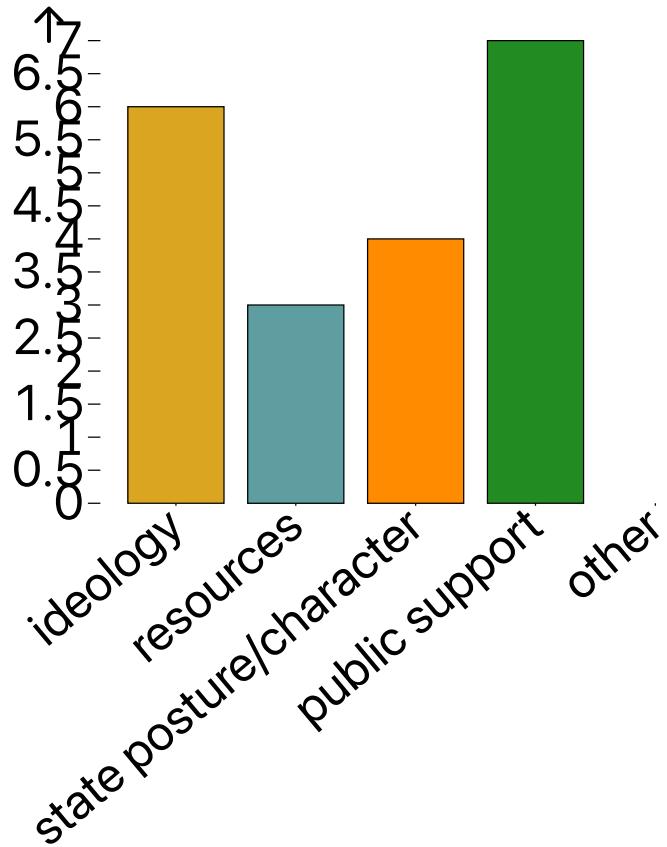
# Poll: strategy formation and effect



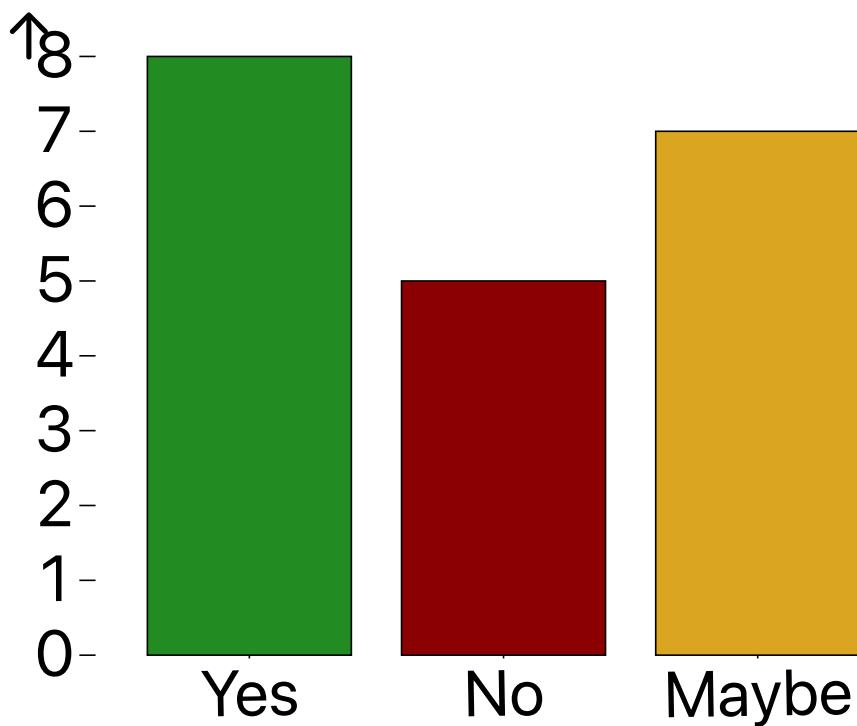
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MAXIMILIANS-  
UNIVERSITÄT  
MÜNCHEN

# Poll results (Respondents: 20)

most important factor shaping movement org. strategy?



do maximalist goals require more extreme strategies?





# Poll results

# Tactical frivolity (Bogad 2016)

more of a humanities/dramaturgical perspective on movements and their tactics

# Temporality

- Grzymala-Busse (2011) on temporality
  - overview
  - definitions and examples
  - tempo and duration



# Grzymala-Busse (2011) - overview

- **mechanisms**: “recurrent causal links between specified initial conditions and outcomes. Specific sequences (orderings) of mechanisms and events then constitute processes.”
- Fundamentals of temporality: how long events take (**duration**), how quickly they change (**tempo**), whether they speed up or slow down (**acceleration**), and when they occur (**timing**)

# Grzymala-Busse (2011) - definitions and examples

Aspect	Definition	Examples
Duration	Temporal length of an event; how much time elapses between the start and end of an action or event	Time elapsed between the announcement that a new agency is founded and its demise, or the period between the takeoff of popular literacy and its full attainment
Tempo	Amount of change per unit of time (dist./time interval); frequency of the 'subevents' in a larger event, or between events in a process.	How much time elapses before each new state institution is established, between each new person gaining literacy
Acceleration (and deceleration)	Derivative of velocity with respect to time (direction vector/direction tempo); rate of change	Postcommunist privatization started to unfold very quickly, with a great deal of entrepreneurial activity and privatization auctions at the outset. In several countries, it then slowed down
Timing	Position on a temporal timeline (itself composed of some units of time, such as electoral cycles or years)	18th-century revolutions had pamphlets and word of mouth as their mobilizing techniques; 20th-century revolutions had television, radio, email, and cell phones at their disposal

# Grzymala-Busse (2011) - tempo and duration

## Faster

Shorter Radical processes: coups, revolutions, shock therapy, regime replacement, and some institutional creation (free elections)

## Slower

Abruptly ending processes: threshold effects, bargaining, establishing some institutions (cf. postcommunist clientelism)

Longer Lengthy instability: revolutions and wars, cascades, predation, postcommunist civil society growth, political party fission

Gradual processes: demographic change, spread of literacy and nationalism, linguistic transformations, quasiparameter change

# Tactics and effecting change

- connecting tactics to outcomes
- tactical innovation
- Spaßguerrillas
- Gene Sharp and nonviolence
- some fun examples



# Connecting tactics to outcomes

- Gamson (1990) found that violent social movements (incl. 'strikes and disruptive techniques') are more likely than nonviolent to achieve their goal
  - more effective in attracting attention and imposing costs on targets/oppoents
  - similarly found by Cress and Snow (2000)
  - BUT... opposite found on regime-challenging movements by Chenoweth and Stephan (2011)
  - Opposite also found in U.S. campus policy by Rojas (2006)

# Connecting tactics to outcomes

- **social control hypothesis** (e.g., Piven and Cloward 1979)
  - disruptive protests/tactics allow movements to win concessions in exchange for ending protests/tactics (*coercion* mechanism)
- **mass mobilisation/social pressure hypothesis** (e.g., Chenoweth and Stephan 2011)
  - gaining enough (visible) support to pressure decision-makers into concessions (*consensus/demonstrative/persuasion* mechanisms)
    - implicit appeal to democratic norms

# (necessity of) tactical innovation

- McAdam (1983): tactical interaction
  - movements *disrupt* as they mount a challenge
  - authorities/targets *adapt* to tactics, dulling their impact
  - movements *innovate* tactics to maintain effective strategy
- With responsive authorities/targets, **this cycle places high demands on movements**
  - (McAdam (1983) writes that by the end of the 1960s, U.S. black rights movement(s) had been made '*tactically impotent*' )

- problem in student movement of unexciting and/or intimidating modes of activism
- Wolfgang Lefèvre (SDS leader):

‘Every event or demonstration should be inventively planned so that it is exciting and fun for students.’

- the ‘fun-fighters’ emerged from the *Sozialistischen Deutschen Studentenbund*
  - Fritz Teufel, Rainer Langhans advocate **playful tactics**
  - long legacy in German activism (e.g., ‘Front Deutscher Äpfel’)

# Gene Sharp and nonviolence (Sharp 1973)

- *'political ju-jitsu'* (using opponents' strength against them): violent repression of nonviolent resistance strengthens resistance by creating sympathy for resisters



# Tactics in practice, example

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- 2016: U.S. state of Texas passes law allowing carrying handguns on university campuses
- at the same time, state 'obsenity laws' forbid bringing dildoes onto campus
- the 'cocks not glocks' campaign was born...



Student protesters with banners and dildos at the 'Cocks Not Glocks' protest (Picture: Rex)

# Tactics in practice, example

‘We’re fighting absurdity with absurdity.’

# Any questions, concerns, feedback for this class?

Anonymous feedback here: <https://forms.gle/AjHt6fcnwZxkSg4X8>

Alternatively, please send me an email: [m.zeller@lmu.de](mailto:m.zeller@lmu.de)

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