

Types of Groups That Engage in Social Action

Organizations to improve our society come in different sizes. Some are large movements; others are small groups of neighbors; still others are of proportions in between. As already noted, we are most interested here in small, voluntary community groups whose members receive no remuneration for their efforts, believe their groups' objectives must be achieved without fail, and are confident that accomplishing their goals will improve the conditions that inspired them to join. They seek the help of nonmembers, officials, or constituents of these decision makers toward implementing the changes they have in mind.

It is useful to compare six kinds of organizations that a citizen can join to foster change, regardless of such organizations' size or location. These are social movements (large or small), improvement associations, pressure groups, citizen participation groups, citizen action groups, and community groups for social action. The distinctions among these types are not sharp, as we will see, since a

given kind of entity may fall under more than one of the major headings. We shall review the salient features of each type of organization.

Social Movements

A social movement is composed of persons who advocate a change in the beliefs or practices of members and nonmembers within a relatively large geographical area. Most movements perpetually try to increase the size of their membership. Some contain smaller associations or local chapters within them. Examples are Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD), the National Rifle Association, the Association to Help Oliver North, the Coalition to Stop the War in Nicaragua, and the National Organization for Women (NOW). Other movements (or ways of describing movements) rely on no structures that hold believers together and are little more than particular points of view spreading among people. Eventually, if an opinion is accepted by many, a set of individuals may found a formal entity to diffuse its notions more widely. Popular views of our time that had already spread among many persons before organizations were formed to promote certain causes involve the legality of abortions, controls on research into DNA, the provision of sanctuary for illegal immigrants, private funding for rebels in Nicaragua, rules for operating nuclear power plants, restrictions on smoking in public places, and testing of citizens for exposure to the HIV virus. Whatever the main concerns are, changes advocated by members of a movement tend to be vague, difficult to achieve, and multiple, rather than clear, attainable, and singular.

The issues at the heart of a movement are usually value-laden and tend to deal with ideas more than with actions. The advocated changes are strongly in accord with what the participants think is right and against what they believe is wrong. Many movements result from actions initiated by a lone demagogue who claims there is a simple, sovereign solution to a complex set of problems (Father Coughlin, James Watt, George Wallace, Oral Roberts, Malcom X). When the demands of a movement are taken up by a formal organization, that body ordinarily is managed by members of a paid professional staff, who work out of a headquarters office to increase the

influence of the organization. Movements use many methods to make their ideas acceptable. They depend most often on lobbying legislators, placing favorite issues on local election ballots, holding rallies, creating demonstrations, and inventing ways of gaining wide attention for their views. Useful writings about social movements include Gerlach and Hine (1970), Lipset and Raab (1970), Toch (1965), Wilson (1973), and Wood and Jackson (1982).

Improvement Associations

Most associations look inward and foster the beliefs or practices of their members, so that those persons can perform better in their professions, hobbies, religions, fraternal activities, patriotic societies, or businesses (Zander, 1985). Among the fifteen thousand associations in the United States (Ruffner, 1968), however, about one in four is devoted to advocating a better state of affairs in some activity outside that body. Examples of associations to improve society are the League of Women Voters, the Ku Klux Klan, the Sierra Club, Common Cause, the Independent America Party, and the John Birch Society. The larger organizations among these have paid staffs, central offices, and branches in various parts of the country. They educate their members through newsletters, conferences, journals, books, and other communications media. They seldom engage in lobbying, lawsuits, threats, or coercion. The central concerns of such bodies vary from time to time as conditions change. They tend to have a number of objectives. Readings on bodies like these are included in Hyams (1975), Lipset and Raab (1970), and Zander (1985).

Pressure Groups

These are organizations whose dominant feature is their advocacy of specific one-issue legislative actions. They are smaller than other kinds of groups for social change, some having only a few members plus a staff of careerist cause-pushers. They may be supported by wealthy sponsors, such as companies whose products or political preferences are under attack. Typical topics for pressure groups are reduction of disliked taxes, advocacy of tariffs to protect

local companies from foreign competition, care for the elderly, increased funding for scientific research, subsidy of farm products, and advocacy of time for prayers in public schools. These groups depend on such methods as lobbying, getting preferred candidates on the ballot, urging that particular bills be put into the legislative hopper, collecting funds to ensure the election of politicians who agree with their views, and working in the election campaigns of favored legislators. Writings on groups like these include Barbrook and Bolt (1980), Douglas and Wildavsky (1982), and Olsen (1982).

Citizen Participation Groups

The term *citizen participation groups* designates committees that provide participants a means, mandated by law, to influence the policies and actions of administrative units in government. The invited members of these bodies serve for no compensation and usually are not professionals or even specialists in the matters on which they are asked to give advice. The term *citizen participation* is also used by sociologists and social psychologists who study why citizens participate in groups for social good, such as block or neighborhood organizations (Wandersman and others, 1987). For the present purposes, I use the term to describe a specific field of interest among political scientists.

Although government agencies have always had advisory committees, the main feature of citizen participation bodies is that their membership is drawn from the ranks of persons who are served by the entities they advise. President Lyndon Johnson fostered the use of such advisory bodies in 1964, when he declared a war on poverty. The Office of Economic Opportunity, which he created to fight this war, required that poor people be given the opportunity for maximum feasible participation in planning and monitoring the services in their communities. The war on poverty was conducted by branches of the Community Action Program (CAP) in each of nearly a thousand towns. It was locally sponsored, according to law, by either public or private agencies. Federal funds were granted to each town so that participants could do what they thought was best in their "theaters" of the war. The idea of encouraging citizen participation soon spread to other governmental agen-

cies working in welfare, housing, reduction of poverty, health care, and urban planning. By 1978, a total of 155 federal agencies required local or regional advisory bodies. Federal guidelines were published, describing how such units should be run. The councils were regularly mandated in such legislation as the Model Cities Act, the Airport and Airways Development Act, the Federal Water Pollution and Controls Act, and the Energy Reorganization Act. The idea was also taken up by the governments of states, counties, cities, and towns. Today, as an illustration of the idea's diffusion throughout the land, Pennsylvania has 165 laws that require local advisory committees for governmental programs.

Students of politics soon became interested in this new layer of government. They believed that the creation of these bodies was stimulated by increased interest (during the 1960s) in civil rights and (during the 1970s) by the desire to hold officials more responsible for their acts (a desire that arose after the Watergate scandals), as well as by the wish among administrative officials to inform citizens and taxpayers more fully about the programs they were sponsoring, with an eye toward strengthening the support of advisers.

Daniel Moynihan, who had an active part in these developments, offers other, more abstract reasons for the creation of these advisory units (Moynihan, 1970). He believes that the planners wanted to develop a sense of power among persons in poor neighborhoods because such people too often feel that they have no control over their destinies. This opportunity for a role in policymaking was supposed to help them see that they and their neighbors amounted to something. Participation in decisions about matters that affected them would also increase the participants' sense of identification with one another, as well as their acceptance of the ideas at hand. Group decisions were expected to be more valuable to the members than private decisions and therefore more closely followed by the persons who made them.

The designers had three goals in mind for these bodies. The first was to give the users of an agency's services a say in the offerings of that organization. This implies that there was to be a redistribution of power, whereby the established holders of influence would give up some of their influence and grant it to the advisers. The second goal was to increase citizens' support for the work of the

agencies. The third was to improve the services offered by these governmental units.

Unlike other kinds of bodies discussed in this chapter, units devoted to citizen participation have been studied a good deal, to see whether they accomplish what they are supposed to. Generally speaking, the answer is no. Ideas offered by citizen advisers have had little impact on the practices of the organizations they serve, according to Berry (1981), Brill (1971), Kweit and Kweit (1971), Langton (1978), Moynihan (1970), and Olsen (1982). These writers give several reasons for this failure. Members of such units were often coopted by the agencies that they were to have enlightened, so that participants did not come up with notions that differed much from those already in place. Their suggestions were neither noticed nor given weight by professionals in the organizations because the officials believed (rightly or wrongly) that the suggestions of the advisers were unworkable, naïve, or based on misinformation. The goals of the agencies were often so vague that the advisers had no clear criteria to use in selecting among alternative plans of actions. According to Brill (1971) and Moynihan (1970), members of the counseling groups often lacked the necessary knowledge to develop sound advice. They preferred confronting to conferring in dealing with officials, and they quarreled among themselves while trying to decide what counsel they should offer. Problems within units of the war on poverty were that poor people moved a lot, community activities were typically staffed by middle-class persons whose views did not match those of the counselors, lower-class people were skeptical from the outset that they could accomplish anything and were easily discouraged, and advisers representing separate groups in the communities could not agree when they joined in common conferences.

The approach also labored under several other disadvantages. Moynihan (1970) says that President Johnson regretted having urged maximum feasible participation and gave the program little support once it was under way because he was concerned about the war in Vietnam and about criticisms of the war on poverty. The government was never quite sure what it was trying to accomplish; it had a theory about the value of participation and about urging it on poor people, but it had little else. There was no remedy, Moyni-

han says, only an untested basis for an untried procedure. The advisory committees were supposed to use a democratic method, but this did not suit the procedures followed in most agencies of government. Furthermore, expectations of results among members of these councils (persons who were not well versed in the professional nuances of the agencies they were to advise) were in fact often unrealistic. Moynihan (1970) states that some leaders of these groups decided to overcome apathy among local citizens by rubbing their sores or discontent raw, or by arousing hatred toward certain programs or persons, so that the listeners would overcome their lethargy in fits of anger. People in the agencies and the advisory units alike were disappointed in the notion of maximum feasible participation. Moynihan (1970) believes, however, that this program for poor people gave local black leaders first-rate training and experience in influential roles just at the time when these people were becoming increasingly interested in urban politics.

Citizen Action Groups

This term is used by those who organize groups composed of persons receiving welfare funds. The aim is to ensure that these people receive everything coming to them. The welfare-rights unions were created outside the sponsorship of the Office of Economic Opportunity. Eventually, they were joined into the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) (Delgado, 1986). Community neighborhood councils in large cities were similar to the welfare-rights unions, but their membership was not limited to persons on welfare. These councils are discussed by Alinsky (1971) and Lancourt (1979) as parts of the so-called back-of-the-yards movement, which arose near the stockyards in Chicago and spread to other large cities.

ACORN units were created by organizers who came to town, often uninvited, and worked to develop entities that would protect the rights of people on welfare. In contrast, organizers on Alinsky's counseling staff (devoted to advising city dwellers) ordinarily were paid to assist those who wanted to create an urban neighborhood council but did not know how to do so. Along with ensuring welfare rights, members of these bodies sought improvements in such

matters as housing (cost, conditions, availability, restricted mortgages), services provided for the poor, environmental conditions, and behavior of the police. Delgado (1986) describes forty different kinds of issues taken up by ACORN bodies at one time or another.

Units engaged in citizen action preferred to confront the people they wished to influence (that is, they attended meetings of official bodies in the city and demanded, loudly, that their grievances be heard and assuaged). Delgado (1986) thinks members preferred direct action, as he called it, because they were skeptical of the results they could obtain by petitioning, lobbying, or negotiating. Alinsky, according to Lancourt (1979), preferred abrasive shouting matches in these situations because such behavior called attention to the problem brought forward by the aggrieved persons and eventually forced the listeners to sit down with the confronters and engage in good-faith bargaining. We will learn more about Alinsky's rules for behavior in such bodies later on.

According to Delgado (1986), there were ten local ACORN organizations in 1975. By 1984, there were eight thousand, in all fifty states. Delgado (1986) and Moynihan (1970) believe that these units spread because organized actions to broaden civil rights and to protest against the war in Vietnam had demonstrated that dissatisfied persons could obtain results that would be impossible without such bodies. Persons who had worked for civil rights or against the war in Vietnam were willing to serve, often to "advance revolutionary consciousness." They were trained as organizers, and many of them (usually recent college graduates) remained on the road for months, working for ACORN to create new chapters wherever feasible. Eventually, Delgado suggests, these separate entities may work together on national causes that interest them, thereby becoming a new political party. Writings about such groups are found in Alinsky (1971), Brill (1971), Delgado (1986), Lancourt (1979), Moynihan (1970), and Piven and Cloward (1977).

Community Groups for Social Action

A sixth type of group seeks to improve local or personal situations. It has appeared throughout history in all kinds of governments. Its prime characteristic, in contrast to the groups dis-

cussed so far, is that a few citizens develop a desire for a specific change in their town and attract others to join in a small social movement toward that end. These people are not appointed, elected, or recruited except by themselves, and they work for free, without financial support, advice, or assistance (save when they hire such counsel). They are not parts of a larger social movement or government plan and are seldom allied with other bodies. Some of these entities have a brief life and are concerned with only one topic; others last many years and take up numerous issues. They cannot, of course, get the relief they seek through their endeavors alone, and so they try to get help from administrative officials or from the constituents of these leaders—their target persons. The individuals they hope to help vary from group to group. They may intend to benefit their own members and no one else; particular persons outside the groups who need special assistance; individuals whom they represent; city blocks, ethnic groups, neighborhoods, or whole communities, perhaps including flora, fauna, or esthetically pleasing objects that have a right to protection. They are unique in that they use any of a wide variety of methods in working toward change, from permitting to pressuring, from helping to harming. Because bodies like these are seldom examined (except by the media, when their actions make news), let us recall a few instances of them. I sort these bodies into separate kinds of units according to who their beneficiaries are supposed to be.

Members Only. A simple example of a self-serving group is one that arose in Boston during the American Revolution. At the time, the British occupied the city and had an encampment around the area that is known today as the Commons. Soldiers' tents were placed on the side of a hill, which in the winter months was the favorite place for sledding among boys in the neighborhood. The young people were unhappy about losing their coasting place and requested a meeting with General Gage, the officer in charge of the troops, to state their grievance. He received them graciously, and after hearing their request and teasing them about their readiness to rebel as their fathers were doing, he agreed to move some tents to make room for the coasters. The neophyte protesters won their way, even though they had no right to make such an appeal.

Although these boys used a gentle approach in seeking change, one can find organized moves that are even milder. In California, for example, in the century following 1850, seventeen utopias came and went (Hine, 1953). Each of these was an isolated community of several dozen persons, who set out to devise an ideal kind of society on either religious or socialistic grounds. They qualify as would-be agents of social change because each group intended to have its community serve as a model society for the rest of the world. The members seldom attempted, however, to bring their newly perfected way of life to the attention of outsiders. They were passive idealists waiting for the rest of the population to discover and copy them; they were mostly ignored. None of them lasted longer than twenty years. They either went broke or quarreled and split up over the best course to follow. Communes in recent years, as described by Kanter (1972), are not always so passive. Some of them send speakers into surrounding areas to spread the ideas they favor.

An excellent study of a community group engaged in influential action is provided by Lindgren (1987). She describes a body that was organized twenty-five years ago to work on a single issue—namely, to oppose the construction of a bridge over a river in the center of a small city. The proposed span was to carry traffic from a busy part of town and empty it into a quiet residential neighborhood. For a quarter of a century, the group of neighbors lobbied members of the city council and officials of the state highway department, offered alternative proposals based on expert advice, held hearings, and informed townsfolk about what was happening. The body was dormant from time to time, coming back to life whenever the bridge question was again up for consideration. Their views did not always prevail, but no bridge has yet been built.

Sometimes a problem arises for a group of neighbors because another group is given something it has requested. For example, the recreation commission of a middle-sized city permitted the erection of lights on poles at a playground, so that baseball games could be played in the evenings. Over several years, the officers of the softball league had collected most of the necessary money and asked the city to put up lights. Because the poles holding the bulbs were unusually high, the resulting brightness caused an unwelcome glare around houses bordering the ballfield. The noise of the games at

night was also a nuisance. As a result, an organization called Neighbors Under the Lights was formed to seek relief from these conditions. The protesters decided to bypass the city's recreation commission and put their complaint before the city council. The council heard them and proposed that leaders among the players meet with residents of the affected houses to find a solution that would please both sides. This procedure was followed, and the joint body developed a plan that called for baffles on the lights, a solid fence near the houses (to reduce noise), limited hours of play, and rules for courteous behavior when foul balls landed in neighboring yards. The city council, acting as a mediating body, approved these ideas and voted to provide funds for the changes plus a dirt berm next to the new wall, to muffle the noise still more. Clearly, neighbors and players alike were understanding of and sympathetic to the desires of the other group. The grievance was easily resolved, but it could have led to a long-term disagreement between players and residents.

Groups of activists sometimes arise because they wish to protect themselves from real or imagined threats to their values. For instance, parents in a small midwestern town believed that teachers were leaving their children's school too early, thereby curtailing the education of the children and providing inadequate services to taxpayers. The offended parents asked the school board for tighter supervision of the teaching staff. This request was denied, on the grounds that the principal of the school should be allowed to supervise his staff without outside interference by board members. Feeling that they had a case to prove, the mothers and fathers set up a watch squad. Members of this body sat in automobiles each day on the street outside the school and recorded which teachers left the building at what hours. Children were also asked to spy on their teachers and to report any wasteful practices. After several weeks, the watchers gave their findings to the principal, with a demand that these data be placed in the personnel files of the teachers and reported to the board of education. The principal refused this request because the group had previously stated its case to the board without making a favorable impression, and the teachers who left the building early had his permission to do so. They were being allowed to complete official business, perform voluntary services in town, or attend professional-improvement classes at the local uni-

versity. The principal also knew that the organizing of these watchers had been primarily the work of a woman who made a career of worrying about whether she was receiving fair treatment in the community. Therefore, he did not believe that many townsfolk would side with the complaining parents. The group's style of operation and reporting generated resentment among the educators who were accused of wrongdoing. These teachers therefore agreed among themselves to provide no further voluntary services outside of school hours. Underground discussion of the issue raised so much distrust that the next school levy was voted down, and educational services had to be decreased. Here, a small-scale action aroused a large-scale reaction (Madison, 1973).

A final example of an organization for self-centered help is one that was formed in England in 1811. The participants were weavers and knitters, who worked in their homes on looms that they rented from the persons who purchased their woven and knitted products (Liversidge, 1972). Since most of the residents of several villages took part in this business, work and life in the town overlapped. The owners charged high rent for the machines and paid low prices for the finished goods. They urged the weavers to work quickly, and so the weavers made mistakes and were then ashamed of their shoddy work. The owners also preferred to hire children because children could be paid less than adults. A few community leaders complained to the bosses about these conditions, but their grievances were ignored. Some instigators declared a work stoppage, but this call was ineffective, since most of the community members were afraid to join the strike. The initiators of the protest then demanded that all weavers and knitters take part in a strike or have their looms destroyed. Soon thereafter a militant band entered the homes of a few holdouts and smashed their knitting frames. This raid, as well as a number of others, was planned and led by a former soldier, who assumed the name Ned Ludd; his followers were known as Luddites. They eventually wrecked more than a thousand machines, yet the owners refused to make the changes requested by the strikers. The bosses pushed instead for national laws against destroying industrial machinery. These laws were passed and the strike was broken.

People Outside the Group. In contrast to groups created for personal ends, some units are developed to benefit people who are not group members. Participants in such entities may gain from their own efforts, but such rewards are side effects, and acquiring them is not the prime goal. Indeed, members of bodies like these often lose money because they help finance their groups' good works and receive no compensation for the time, energy, and strain they put into a cause, although they do obtain satisfaction from helping others, even at some cost to themselves. They are altruists (Bar-Tal, 1976; Macaulay and Berkowitz, 1970).

Members of units created to help disadvantaged persons may provide direct help to the deprived. These services are expensive, and so the altruists ask townfolk to help cover the costs. A unit may begin a program (say, to furnish food for homeless persons or to help new immigrants find homes) on the assumption that financial assistance can be obtained from kindhearted neighbors, churches, and welfare funding agencies, or a unit may start a project simply to demonstrate what can be done. Once such a program is under way, the group asks governmental agencies for continuing sponsorship, hoping that thereafter it will be supported by the government. Whether initiators of such activities look to ordinary citizens or to city officials for financial support, they must attract wide interest in their goals and must influence persons who will help carry on their activities. Often the best way to gain the help they need is to appeal to the general public, asking the public to convince local agencies that they ought to take the new program under their wing.

Capraro (1979) describes a community-development corporation created in southwest Chicago to form a coalition among neighborhood residents, local banks, and businesses. The aim of this body was to change the growing perception that the community was gradually becoming a slum. A large building in the area's business district had been vacated, and the coalition worked to make sure that the new tenants would be good neighbors, rather than proprietors of adult bookstores, bookie joints, or bars. They helped get the building refurbished and recruited reputable businesses, including a jewelry store and a delicatessen. The building's value immediately increased. This same body also renovated a large apartment house

that had previously been a haven for drug dealers and was supposed to have been torn down (Wandersman, 1984).

As another example, in a rapidly growing city there is only one road to carry traffic between the northern and southern parts of town. Everyone complains of the crowded conditions on this thoroughfare, but local officials do not wish to discuss a solution because the only place available for a parallel way is through land on the town's eastern edge, which has been set aside as an open space and is not to be used by anyone but pedestrians. Citizens who defend the open space are vociferous in their arguments against putting a road through that territory, and they readily recruit rabid supporters when that is necessary. Thus, the issue is quietly ignored by the city council, the planning commission, and the traffic commission, even though something will have to be done sooner or later. A retired civil engineer and several friends have designated themselves as a task force. Their goal is to find a route for an avenue through the open area that will be minimally offensive to all concerned. They have gathered the necessary engineering data and made detailed drawings at their own expense. The course they favor requires the widening and extending of streets close to the open space. It also calls for a limited-access road, which means that no driver will be able to leave the highway where it passes through the untouched area. They have a plan that they think will work and have presented it to various groups, asking the listeners for criticisms and suggestions. They hope to generate a favorable public response and an invitation to present their drawings before one of the braver official bodies. No member of the initiating group will benefit directly if this new road is built.

As still another example, a different kind of unit, in this city and in others nearby, was recently created to take action for the good of all. (Once again, the officials who should have sponsored helpful changes were not willing or able to do so.) The members of the helping units recognized that their communities were growing, and that it would not be long before all land suitable for parks, schools, or other public buildings was covered with houses, shops, and large buildings and that the plots would become so expensive that the cities would be unable to afford them. The helpers in each community therefore created trust funds, composed of contributions

from local citizens and firms, to buy land suitable for public use and to hold this real estate until their city governments might wish to obtain it and would be able to pay for it. The land would be sold at the price paid years before, rather than at a later, inflated price. If a community's government were to express no interest in such land, then the helping units, after a reasonable period of time, would sell it to help cover their own expenses. No one would benefit unduly from this arrangement.

Some years ago, planning groups were developed in a number of cities to examine and evaluate local social programs. These groups were created under the joint financial sponsorship of the Ford Foundation and an agency of the federal government (Marris and Rein, 1967). Staff members in both the foundation and the federal agency believed they could help improve communities' social services by asking that any studies of these programs, as well as any changes proceeding from such investigations, meet criteria created by the sponsors. They also offered funds to help establish new activities. The members of these planning groups were community leaders. Few were professionally engaged (or experienced) in alleviating local social problems. They assumed, however, that such issues demanded disinterested and objective study, along with wise social engineering. They also believed that their lack of past involvement in such programs made it possible for them to deal objectively with the facts, rather than base their decisions on compassion, as had been done too often in the past. Marris and Rein (1967), who studied these planning groups, state that most of them were not successful (that is, few of the plans created by these groups were adopted by local people). A major reason was that the group members had developed their ideas without giving sufficient consideration to conflicting interests among residents of the town, nor were their ideas generally accepted by local social workers.

Here is a final example of an altruistic group. In 1942, before laws supporting the civil rights of black Americans were common, some white college students in Iowa City met to plan how they could persuade the owners of local restaurants to serve black students. All eating places in that town were lily-white; any "colored" student who entered a restaurant was told to leave. When asked about this policy, the owners explained that white customers would

protest if a Negro were served. The activists decided to focus on this rationalization because they believed that few students would even notice, let alone object, if a black student were served. Accordingly, they interviewed owners of the student eateries. As they had expected, all the owners said privately that they were willing to serve black students but were afraid to do so. Next, the students circulated a petition on campus, in which they asked signers to say that they would not object if black students were served at a nearby table. Armed with many signatures, members of the change group again talked to the owners and displayed their petitions, showing that there was little danger of an unfavorable reaction from white customers. The owners were again asked whether they would serve black students who came into their restaurants. Most said that they would. This agreement was tested when a few black students were asked to enter each restaurant. Activists would be present to observe how they were treated. None of the black customers had any difficulty. Although the plan was simple, it took a remarkable amount of work to bring it off.

Members and Others. The most common type of group for social action benefits the participants themselves, as well as a specific set of persons they represent (or claim to). Here are some examples.

Residents on the west side of a small city in Oklahoma learned that a manufacturing firm was planning to develop a dump nearby, where toxic wastes would be buried. The townsfolk feared that these poisons might seep into the drinking water or be carried in the winds. A concerned couple brought their neighbors together to discuss this threat. They decided to hire a lawyer and to sue the firm for endangering the public's health. A committee of the members also asked state legislators to pass a law that would forbid construction of a dump near a residential part of the city. They emphasized to the lawmakers that their cause was sponsored by hundreds of persons. Most of their efforts went into recruiting new members and into earning the money needed for the lawyer's fees. They conducted bake sales, held rallies, spoke to clubs, and passed out pamphlets at local shopping malls, asking in each case for financial help. Their actions were low-key and dignified, yet many

members received anonymous telephone calls and letters accusing them of being radicals and troublemakers. Their efforts failed.

A comparable group developed in New Jersey when a state-appointed environmental commission decided to get rid of radioactive waste by blending it with uncontaminated dirt and burying the mixture in an abandoned gravel quarry and in the hayfields of adjacent land (Hanley, 1986). Neighbors in the selected area heard rumors of this plan and set up a meeting with state officials to learn more about it. At this session, the farmer whose land had been chosen to be the disposal site heard for the first time that he was the designated host. Representatives of the environmental agency said that there was no danger from the material to be buried. The residents did not believe these assurances. They developed an organization to prevent creation of the dump. They blockaded the only access road, so that trucks could not reach the site, and they built a fortress of railroad ties to protect themselves from attack. They hired a lawyer to appeal for an appropriate injunction. They set up a telephone network and a warning system, so that two hundred sympathetic citizens could be gathered at the battleground on short notice. They earned funds to support their activities by holding rock concerts and walkathons. They also sold baseball caps in local stores with the slogan "Hell No, We Won't Glow!" The dump site was moved to a different location.

When an area experiences a rapid growth in population, some residents may wish to slow these changes. For example, one body was committed to the prevention of growth in a suburban town. This group was composed initially of persons who were angry over heavy traffic during rush hours, and who assembled in response to an announced forum on problems of transportation. Those who attended decided that the reason for the traffic problem was that the population of the city had grown too large for the size and layout of its streets. Many new residents had been drawn to the town because a few years earlier it had encouraged the construction of half a dozen large office buildings. Now the structures and their occupants were on hand, and the result was much heavier traffic. The assembled citizens agreed to form an organization that would prevent further growth. They soon had a chance to further their cause, when developers proposed to close a few streets and build a

new shopping mall downtown. The no-growth body worked to prevent this development, got the issue placed on a citywide ballot, and stopped the mall. As a result of this election, a new law was also put on the town's books. It requires that no new structure taller than six stories and larger than ten thousand square feet be built in the city without the approval of a majority of voters in a citywide ballot. The cost of such an election is to be paid by the builder. This regulation will stay in effect until the streets are improved enough to handle automobile traffic better than they now do. The goal that the no-growth advocates seek is precise—a traffic light must not hold up a motorist for more than a stated number of seconds. (This improvement in the flow of traffic, as it turns out, has been impossible to achieve.) New building is effectively stalled for the time being because no developer wants to pay for a citywide election. Meanwhile, the group against growth has become a political pressure body and has managed to get members elected to the city council, so that the majority of council members now support the no-growth stand.

The movement for black power among young people in the southern states was a form of activism in which members of small cells worked to benefit both themselves and others in their communities. These units developed spontaneously, each on its own. There was no regional movement, nor was there any joint conspiracy among the teams in separate towns to disobey the laws that infringed civil rights. National black leaders had made the times ripe for some kind of effort to get such laws changed. Nevertheless, the leaders were surprised when youths took action without letting the veterans in on their plans (Gerlach and Hine, 1970). Their typical moves are familiar. A squad of well-dressed and courteous black youths entered an eating place and waited for service. They refused to leave when asked to do so and continued to sit quietly, sometimes for hours. Sooner or later, the manager would ask police to remove the unwanted guests, an action that won the manager publicity that was not always favorable. The same procedure was used in many other public places that barred black people, such as libraries, swimming pools, railroad waiting rooms, and even schools. Eventually, groups of white students from northern colleges journeyed south to help the black-power units conduct their campaigns. These

new-age carpetbaggers were not given a friendly welcome by white residents or officials. Nevertheless, the laws restricting the access of black people to public places eventually were removed, partly as a result of the actions by these young people.

Citizens are sometimes moved to take action when they dislike a step proposed by officials. For example, a group was formed to prevent the return of an unwanted prisoner to his hometown in California. Years earlier, he had been convicted of raping and maiming a young girl in that city. His forthcoming parole from prison was publicly announced by correction officials, in accordance with the law. When the intention to parole this man became known, a number of mothers met and prepared a complaint, which they delivered to the warden of the prison. This grievance received no response. After his release, the parolee rented an apartment in his old neighborhood. The mothers began a vigil outside his building, objecting to his presence. These actions earned attention from the news media. He left two days later, under police escort. Persons who had formed the protesting group admitted to reporters that they were without pity, but they were sure no one in the town would object to their approach. No one did (Chamberlain, 1987).

As another example of a group created to benefit both itself and others, consider the vigilantes in San Francisco during the days of the Gold Rush. In 1851, the city was in a third year of rapid growth, and much easy-come-easy-go wealth was held by its young, mostly male population. Many disreputable new arrivals came to acquire some of this money, without enduring the rigors that the original finders had experienced. The methods that the newcomers employed did not win the admiration of those who reluctantly provided these funds. At the time, San Francisco had no full-fledged government or officers of the law, and so the vigilantes—mostly businessmen in town—appointed themselves the operators of a judicial system for punishing those who deserved punishment. They hoped, too, that their amateur efforts would hasten the establishment of legitimate ordinances, courts of law, and a police force. They set about punishing thieves and other wrongdoers, without using due process or asking for public approval of their moves. Hangings were conducted in the streets, in full view of the residents.

During their period of “service,” the vigilantes arrested ninety-one men, hanged four of them, banished twenty-eight from the city, punished sixteen in other ways, and set sixteen free. They believed that their actions caused a drop in the rate of crime and that the goodness of these results justified their methods. They described the persons they arrested as too evil to deserve civil rights. As soon as the city created agencies and officials who could defend law and order, the vigilantes ceased their operations.

Sometimes beneficiaries are objects, or states of affairs. Some groups are developed to improve attractive objects or the products of nature. Members believe that a valuable thing or place should be protected, regardless of its value for humans. A founder of a group that works to conserve open land put it this way: “We wanted to argue for the wilderness for its own sake, instead of having to come up with a bunch of human-centered reasons about why wilderness is good. It just is. That’s all there is to it” (Diringer, 1987). Arguments in favor of such a view have been offered by Christopher Stone in his 1974 book *Should Trees Have Standing? Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects*. Stone holds that legal rights have been extended in the past to people who previously had none; likewise, it is reasonable that endangered objects can also be deserving of protection. He proposes that legal rights be granted to objects in the environment such as trees, mountains, rivers, and lakes, just as corporations have been given rights and protected by law (regardless of actions by their individual members). The beneficiary is the object itself, not the human users of it. Examples of this kind of activity are efforts to refurbish a statue; to prohibit roads in the wilderness; to prevent species of plants, animals, and birds from extinction; to name a mountain; and to preserve a historical site.

National movements to prevent cruelty to animals have been around for a long time. Their work has led to the development of federal guidelines that researchers must obey if they wish to use animals in their laboratories. Most researchers believe they have a legal and ethical responsibility to follow these regulations in caring for their animals, and they do so. The rules have provided a rationale, however, for groups on college campuses and elsewhere who protest the use of animals in medical and other research. Because

laboratory animals cannot defend themselves, the protesters suspect that the researchers carelessly cause pain to the imprisoned beasts. As a result, the activists try to rescue the animals by breaking into the buildings where they are kept, destroying equipment in the laboratories, and even burning down the research structures. Defense of the defenseless can arouse extraordinary hostility.

A group in a western city conducts a watch over research that is trying to reduce the vulnerability of strawberry plants to frost. In this work, approved by the National Institutes of Health, the plants are sprayed with a solution containing bacteria that (it is hoped) will prevent the formation of ice on their leaves when the temperature falls below freezing. These bacteria have been created through genetic engineering. The members of the group objecting to these experimental activities fear that the manufactured bacteria may spread to other plants and cause unfavorable effects. To prevent such an occurrence, the watchers have destroyed the experimental strawberry plot several times, evading guards who were posted to protect the berries day and night. The members of this aggressive body call themselves the Environmental Guerrillas. One member commented on the group's behavior in this way: "I am not at all happy that it's come to this, but I don't feel I have any choice. To me, the stakes are so high, I'm willing to do that. I'm willing to make sure that none of the tests succeed. . . . What's exciting is that for once you feel empowered in a world that tries to take your power away. You're demanding that your voice be heard" (Diringer, 1987, p. A-8). For such believers (as is so often the case), might is right.

Summary

Community groups seek to acquire a say for citizens in solving local social problems, improving unpleasant situations, and creating other changes. Six separate kinds of bodies interested in social change are social movements, improvement associations, pressure groups, citizen participation groups, citizen action groups, and community groups for social action. Our major attention will be devoted to the latter two kinds of bodies because these have seldom been studied, and they are small entities created by amateurs to

accomplish tasks important to them. How and why do these units develop? How do they keep up their courage? What methods do they use in their actions, and why? How do the persons they try to influence react to these bodies? These questions are considered in the following pages.

Selecting the Appropriate Method for Social Action

How do agents of change choose among the many methods of action available to them? Why do they choose one method over another? The answers to these questions cannot be simple because change seekers need to take many things into consideration before making a choice and because each situation calling for social action is different. Therefore, we shall consider some of the circumstances that can affect this decision. Before doing so, however, let us recall the situation faced by activists when they decide which method their group will use. The main ideas are these:

1. A number of persons (agents of change) wish to transform a given state of affairs in their community.
2. They realize that to bring this innovation about, they need the agreement and help of decision-making individuals in the town (target persons), and that they themselves must convince

- these people or their constituents to sponsor the change, and perhaps help them to do so.
3. They work as a group because they believe that collaboration is more likely to be successful in influencing the targets.
 4. The change they want to develop is their group's objective.
 5. They can use any of a number of methods in trying to convince target persons that the change is necessary.
 6. Some of these methods are more likely to be used for informing and advising target persons or requesting them to consider the issue. Different methods are employed for pressing the targets to make one specific decision and no other.

Determining a Course of Action

Which course of action the initiators pursue is determined, as I see it, by their answers to three questions, which they can hardly avoid. First, what will work best (that is, which method promises the greatest likelihood of success)? This estimate is tempered by the change agents' conjectures concerning how target persons feel about the issue brought before them, and by the change agents' judgments about what method they can use best. Second, what method most conforms to the values that they wish to follow while acting as agents of change? Third, what satisfactions can they derive from the experience itself of using a given method? In answering these questions, change agents must consider what approach will give them the most immediate relief. We now consider these matters more fully.

What Will Work Best? By the time change agents are ready to choose a method, they ordinarily know, clearly or vaguely, what end they intend to seek, and they assume that the success of their unit requires reasonable movement toward that goal. Such knowledge is not very helpful in choosing which tactic to employ, however, because any method of influencing, in principle, may be used to try to reach any kind of objective. The choice of method is more strongly guided, I would guess, by the activists' intentions concerning who is to benefit from the change and by their expectations

about whether the target persons will favor or dislike the proposal put before them. To be more specific, reformers recognize at an early stage who is to benefit from the change: themselves, others, both themselves and others, or the community at large. This intention causes them to lean toward being either permissive (less constraining) or pressuring (more constraining) as they try to influence target persons.

Suppose, for instance, that they wish to gain an objective that will benefit themselves but no one else. In such a case, reformers will assign the most weight to their own desires and will want to pressure target persons to move in the desired direction and no other. They will probably prefer one or another of the constraining methods, unless the decision makers quickly agree to what the change agents request. In the latter instance, reformers will favor a nonconstraining method.

If, by contrast, reformers intend to benefit only parties outside their own group, they will devote most of their attention to the needs of those persons. When these others can be helped only through the good offices of the target persons, and when the target persons are not willing to assist in this cause, the reformers will probably put pressure on the decision makers by using one or more constraining methods, probably persuasion. Should agents of change want to aid both themselves and others, they will attend equally to the wishes of both groups and will prefer a method, such as negotiating, bargaining, or constructive problem solving, that can lead to actions that will satisfy both parties. In some instances, spokespersons for the other beneficiaries of the effort may join in this discussion as well.

In still other examples, the agents of change may wish to help the target persons by offering advice, information, or the results of investigations. Doubtless, reformers would not press such assistance on the decision makers if it were not welcome; therefore, they would avoid nonconstraining methods in such a situation.

Agents of change can do some things that will help them decide which method or combination of methods will work best. They make their choice by observing the targeted individuals in meetings, interviewing them, or talking with those who know them well, in order to learn how they operate and to judge how they

might respond to an overture made by the activists. The following list describes scenarios for the behavior of target persons, as the agents of change may see them. In each case, a different influencing method may be appropriate. We proceed in sequence from encouraging to coercive methods:

1. Change agents themselves are disadvantaged. They expect that target persons will be sympathetic to their plight but they do not wish to ask for help. In such a situation, the agents of change simply wait and hope that the good will of the decision makers will make them feel that they should take steps to aid the disadvantaged change agents.
2. Agents of change learn that the target persons are also dissatisfied with the state of affairs that the activists wish to modify, and that these decision makers are seeking ideas about what improvements ought to be made. In this case, seekers of change may find (or illustrate) a model of what could be done, either through their own planning or by bringing before target persons a representative from a place that has dealt with the same problem.
3. Decision makers recognize that they are responsible for improving a bad situation and are looking for ideas about how to do this. They ask the agents of change for advice, ideas, or expert information, and the change agents provide it.
4. Target persons are not much interested in the issue bothering reformers because they are not well informed about it. Agents of change use whatever means they can to provide information about the issue to the target persons and the community at large. They write stories for newspapers or television programs, hold rallies, give speeches, stage exhibits, sponsor parades, or create demonstrations to present the facts.
5. Individuals for whom target persons are responsible are in need of housing, food, funds, or rescue. The agents of change provide nurturing and assistance directly to these needy people while hoping that the target persons will learn about this helping program and provide enduring financial assistance.
6. Target persons have plans for introducing changes similar to those desired by agents of change. The latter discuss the issue and negotiate with the decision makers, in order to be sure that all the persons involved are thinking alike.

7. Target persons and agents of change have similar objectives but do not agree on methods for gaining those ends. The reformers propose that both factions engage in a process of problem solving, in order to find a course of action that will satisfy both sides.

8. Activists believe that they cannot trust target persons to do what they say they will. The change agents therefore look for help from a legitimate third party, who will guide a process of mediation, binding arbitration, or use of the legal system.

9. Reformers believe that the only way to influence target persons is to persuade them, and so they mount an effort to convince the decision makers by means of debate, argument, or strong writings and speeches.

10. If efforts at persuasion do not work, the agents turn to the use of propaganda and emotion-laden ideas, including misinformation and distortion, in order to convince persons who have the ear of the target persons or who have the power to remove them from office.

11. Activists believe that target persons will be susceptible to influence if they are given a reward (praise, approval, titles, money). They offer a reward to encourage action by the target persons, or they provide it after the decision makers act as the agents of change desire. They give favors to get favors.

12. Target persons reject proposals by agents of change or ignore them. The change agents then force target persons to pay attention to their desires by interfering with the latter group's operations, through strikes, demonstrations, hostage taking, interruption of meetings, or other blocking procedures, until the desired change is delivered.

13. Target persons refuse to do what is asked of them. Agents of change therefore inflict injury directly on the refusers, or on bystanders or valued objects. They employ bombs, guns, coups d'état, or other kinds of violence to get their way.

Different views of beneficiaries and target persons call for different methods. Reformers consider additional matters when deciding which method to use. To increase their chances of success, for instance, the change agents try to prevent target persons from opposing a proposal—by casting it in terms that fit with past views

and goals of the target persons, by demonstrating that the change will fit the target persons' traditions, values, ways of operating, or rules, and by claiming that it will help the target persons do better what they are already doing. They choose the style of presentation that they think will be the most convincing. If the target persons are formal in their procedures, the change agents behave in a formal way. If the target persons' procedures are relaxed, the change agents' style will be likewise. When meeting with groups whose members have much power, the activists will try to win the others' good will. When meeting with target persons who have little power, they will be forceful and brisk (Zander, 1982). It is also clear that change agents must assess similarities and differences when preparing to appear before groups of elected officials, city employees, supervisors of private agencies, businesspeople, or the voting public.

If they sense that the target persons are especially likely to resist direct constraints, the activists will try not to generate a negative emotional response among those they hope to influence. They are patient, rational, helpful, and informative, and they avoid propaganda, strong bargaining, and coercion. In short, the innovators use encouraging methods, rather than pressuring ones. Activists cannot confidently plan how to prevent resistance among target persons, however, until they actually make an attempt to influence them and discover whether their own behavior arouses an unfavorable reaction. In some instances, as we know, activists deliberately try to generate anger and rejection among target persons. They do this when they believe that their case would not receive a fair hearing if they were to use a more permissive method; they make matters unpleasant for the target persons, in order to make them ready to bargain.

Members of a group for social action consider other issues in deciding how to convince target persons. Early on, they ask themselves several questions. Have we solved such a problem in the past? How did we do it? If the group's own history is not helpful, its members learn how members of other groups have been able to influence the target persons, and they favor a method that has already worked.

Another consideration has to do with what members can do skillfully. Can they give speeches, reason clearly in arguments, write

publicity, mount exhibits, bargain wisely, or threaten target persons? Do some of the members have the training needed for providing emergency care to individuals, preparing food for the homeless, fighting a fire or a flood, analyzing community finances, designing a flower garden, or counseling those in need of help? Do some members have the temperament to be poised on the witness stand, compassionate in nurturing, objective in problem solving, courageous in a demonstration, senseless in a riot, or ruthless in actions that are intended to harm people? The abilities of the members have much to do with the method they adopt. Some people will have had much experience in groups and meetings, and so they will participate in these with ease. Others need training and encouragement before they will risk activism. Naïve members prefer simpler methods—usually aggressive ones, I suspect.

Do group members have the necessary resources to use a given method? Some procedures cost more than others. Typically, social action turns out to be more expensive (in terms of money, energy, and emotional strain) than activists initially assume. Costly procedures include advertisements in the news media, exhibits, equipment for providing emergency care, mailings, hostage taking, and rallies. Necessary resources may be space, special training for personnel, medical supplies, books, or reports. Such resources are not necessary, however, for picketing, speaking before a body of decision makers, interrupting a meeting, or calling a conference of potential protesters. Priscoli (1978) gives a rough estimate of the comparative costs of different methods for social action.

A further question raised by activists is how long the procedure will take. Preference is given to methods that will be quickly effective, since a long wait reduces the enthusiasm of the innovators. Most groups become frustrated and lose their morale if their action takes too long. In addition, group leaders examine whether the details and step-by-step procedures to be followed are understood by members. Does each member know what he or she must do and how to do it? Are there clear processes for hiring a mediator, taking a case to court, getting a story published in the newspaper, obtaining a permit for a parade, or making a bomb? Leaders prefer actions that they know how to mount. To avoid disagreement, they probably

favor methods that prescribe a clear division of labor among group members.

Will the Method Fit the Group's Values? Reformers avoid procedures that they believe are improper because such acts offend their beliefs about right and wrong. For example, they will not call names at a public meeting or throw rocks through windows if such actions violate their code of ethics. They will, in contrast, write a letter to an editor or participate in a strike if they feel that it is the duty of a citizen to help correct a situation in these ways.

The values of members influence whether they want to benefit only themselves, other persons, or both themselves and others. People who work to gratify only themselves probably have quite different values (in operation at the moment, anyway) from the values of those who work to satisfy others. Self-centered reformers may justify their selfishness by pointing to their strong faith in individual enterprise or in solving problems on one's own. Altruistic reformers may speak in favor of caring for others (the able should help the lame), or they may prefer cooperation among community groups and see value in jointly solving problems. Self-serving citizens would be more likely to use constraining methods and to justify their assertive style as necessary for taking care of themselves. Compassionate reformers would probably more often use nonconstraining methods, perhaps nurturing ones, to help others, but they would be prepared to take up coercive methods if softer procedures got no results.

Ordinarily, most activists prefer methods that will not offend bystanders, since they wish to win the sympathy and support of neighbors through their actions. In many cases, they hope to gain just that and little else. They will often avoid the use of procedures that expose them to ridicule or criticism. Participating in a parade, a picket line, or a demonstration, for example, may provoke public disapproval. Such an unfavorable reception occurred in a town that was next to a weapons-storage depot. A set of citizens in the community obtained signatures of local residents on petitions, which asked for relief from the actions of activists who had been protesting shipments of military supplies from that depot for many months. The protesters stood outside the gate of the depot day and night.

The townsfolk accused them of interfering with automobile traffic in the city and of littering. The petitioners submitted their plea for redress to the commissioners of the county, and they won. The protesters could continue their daily vigil, but they had to stay out of the street, remove the ugly shack they used in bad weather, and clean up after themselves daily.

Is the Method Satisfying? Change agents may select a method merely because the actions it requires are gratifying in themselves, even though the participants may have no definite notion of what their moves will accomplish. They may decide, for example, to shout derisive comments in the middle of a meeting, make threats, march in a parade, hold a rally, sponsor a silent vigil, call a meeting, or bomb an airport, without planning beyond these activities. They may do these things because they want relief from their anger, grief, or fear.

Weick (1979) proposes, as noted earlier, that members of some groups prefer at the very outset to choose a procedure, rather than a group goal. A method, once selected, helps members work together smoothly; later, when they analyze what they have done and why, they are better able to select an objective. Thus, members should first choose a method, Weick believes, because they get action under way, and the purpose of these actions will eventually become evident to them.

Why Members of Action Groups Choose Inappropriate Methods

An inappropriate method is one that does not help activists influence listeners because the reformers are not able to do what the procedure requires (write, speak, argue, vilify, charm, persuade), do not have the resources they need, or cause the target persons to become obstinate, opposed, or resistant. Why do reformers select methods that turn out to be ineffective?

One reason is that the people who choose the group's methods are not able to judge whether one procedure is better than another because their group's objectives are not clear enough to guide such an appraisal. If innovators are not sure what they want

to accomplish and why, they cannot plan how to reach their objective. When a group's end provides little guidance, moreover, separate ideas among members about the wisest plan of action will probably not fit together well; each person will pay most attention to ways of satisfying his or her personal interests because there is no criterion for evaluating what is useful for the body as a whole.

The success of change agents in influencing decision makers, as we have observed, depends on how correctly they estimate what ideas and style of delivery will be most acceptable to the target persons. For example, if the change seekers think that their listeners will appreciate background information, whereas the listeners actually want ideas about what steps they ought to take, the target persons will see the activists as too vague and unconvincing. As another example, the reformers may propose a solution when the officials want facts about the issue, so that they can choose their own answer in light of that information. In short, agents of change may take a wrong approach because they have not properly diagnosed what would best appeal to the target persons.

A further cause of choosing an inappropriate method is that agents of change become defensive, angry, or suspicious toward the behavior of the target persons. The reformers thereupon try to defend their honor, assuage their anger, or confirm their suspicions. Even though such emotions are legitimate reasons for trying to influence those who appear to cause them, they usually lead to behavior among change agents that makes the target persons want to defend themselves in turn, instead of trying to relieve the condition raised by the activists.

Another frequent reason for an unwise choice of method by agents of change is that they follow unsound procedures in reaching a decision. Perhaps participants are too eager to maintain good relations with one another, and so they fail to test ideas brought up in their meetings because doing so requires them to ask questions, criticize others' thinking, or disagree. Instead, they do what is most likely to be agreeable to all. They discuss only a few potential solutions and do not examine the consequences that may follow from these actions. They make no suggestions that might be controversial (Janis, 1972).

Some change agents talk more than others and therefore have

greater influence on their group's decisions, even though their ideas may not be the best ones (Zander, 1982). An imbalance in the spread of participation is not always bad, but it can be a source of difficulty if the method under discussion is one that affects many members, who all ought to have a say. The infrequent speakers may feel restrained because they do not understand the plan, are not interested in it, are afraid of making an observation that will be rejected, are intimidated by the difficulty of the role they are expected to take, or are awed by being in the presence of powerful persons. If an unbalanced meeting limits verbal participation in this way, a group's plan of action may turn out to be inappropriate (Zander, 1982).

When members of a group must deal with an emergency (such as a storm, fire, or flood), they are prone to make errors in choosing a course of action, either because time pressure makes them consider fewer options before they decide what to do or because decisions are made by persons who are not expert in handling a crisis. During such a critical period, moreover, information coming to the group may be of poor quality because messages provided in haste are either badly expressed or inadequately thought through. Under the anxiety created by stress, behavior tends to be less flexible and imaginative than it might otherwise be (Holsti, 1971). When members must hurry for reasons like these, the group's efforts are liable to be inefficient and less salient to its prime purposes.

Summary

Leaders of a group that is planning how to initiate a change choose among many methods for this action. In making a choice, they consider several things. What method will work best, in light of the group's objective and the nature of the target persons? To answer this question, they make a judgment about how much or little constraint they should use with the target persons, so that the latter will act. They make this judgment by observing whether the target persons are likely to be more interested in the substantive issue or in the incentive that agents of change offer. Activists choose the method that fits the target persons best.

They also select the procedure that they think they can per-

form most successfully—it has worked for others, the members are able to do what it requires, they have or can obtain the resources they need, it will be effective quickly, they know how to use it, and its effect can be reliably determined. They also favor a method that will not violate their values and whose use is itself attractive.

Activists may sometimes select a method that is inappropriate (meaning that it does not help them accomplish what they want) if their goals are too vague to guide a wise choice, if they have incorrect information about the target persons, or if they use unsound processes in trying to make this decision.