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Chapter 13. Networks and social movements: A research program

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In this book we have charted the contribution of network perspectives to the study of social movements and collective action at different levels. We have illustrated how networks affect individual contributions to collective action in both democratic (Passy) and non-democratic (Anheier) organizations; how patterns of inter-organizational linkages reflect different styles of collective action and affect the circulation of resources both within movement milieus and between movement organizations and the political system (Osa, Diani, Ansell); how network concepts and techniques may be used to generate a more nuanced account of key elements of the relationship between movements and the broader political process, such as the role of elites (Broadbent), the configuration of alliance and conflict structures in a political system (Tilly and Wood), the clustering of episodes of collective action in broader cycles (Oliver and Myers). We have also highlighted the differences in the logics of different theoretical perspectives (Gould, Mische).

Achieving greater clarification regarding the use of a polisemic concept like network, and mapping recent developments in several areas of inquiry, might not be a negligible achievement in its own right. My question here is whether it would not be possible and desirable to go one step further, and attempt to integrate into a specific research program what many might still regard as a fairly heterogeneous set of intellectual questions and procedures. In the

previous chapter, Doug McAdam has presented his proposal for an expansion along interpretative lines of the structural program, that he largely identifies with network accounts of individual recruitment and participation. More specifically, he has invoked a greater recognition of the role of cultural forms and discourses in constructing social relations and constituting the mechanisms through which networks operate. In doing so, not only he has effectively integrated many of our chapters; he has also provided a possible bridge between research on social movements and broader controversies in social science.

McAdam's chapter may also read as an invitation to social movement researchers to go beyond the empirically defined boundaries of their specific field of inquiry, and engage in the search for more general mechanisms which can illuminate not only the traits and developments of specific social movements, but a much broader range of 'dynamics of contention', from revolution to democratization (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; Tilly 2001). The tendency to embed social movement analysis in broader social science frameworks is certainly not new, even though it has taken different forms in North America, where the dialogue to organization theory has been most intense (Zald and McCarthy 1987), and in Europe, with the analysis of movements overlapping at times with that of macrostructural change (Habermas 1981; Offe 1985), cognitive praxis (Eyerman and Jamison 1991), or identity dynamics in information society (Melucci 1996).

There is nothing wrong, and a lot to commend, in these orientations. They may act as an antidote to disciplinary parochialism; they may also facilitate the spread of important research

findings beyond the professional subgroups who happen to have a direct empirical interest in certain specific phenomena. At the same time, however, as a very consequence of the greater integration between social movement studies and other fields, the question arises ‘what is peculiar to the contribution of social movement research – in this particular case, of network approaches to social movements’? Social movement researchers may have paid more attention than other scholars to certain themes: e.g., the relationship between networks and individual participation has been more frequently explored by them than by students of political parties. But this is not in itself very revealing. The real question is whether there is a distinctive theoretical contribution.

On one level, this may look like a gratuitous question: there are innumerable areas in which scholars, conventionally identified as ‘social movement researchers’, have contributed to the understanding of broader social processes, from collective action dynamics (Oliver and Marwell 2001) to identity formation (Melucci 1996), from the mobilization of social resources (McCarthy and Zald 1987) to changes in forms of public action (Tilly 1978, 1995). However, most of these contributions would be entirely meaningful if their authors did not speak of ‘movements’ at all. The concept of social movement has always had uncertain status among American scholars, who have preferred terms like protest, collective action, etc. In Europe, even people who emphasized the analytical nature of the concept of ‘social movement’ like Melucci (1995, 1996) suggested dropping it, due to its too strong association with industrial society, and only stuck to it for lack of better alternatives. In this chapter I take a different approach. I argue

that focusing on the concept of social movement – in particular, treating movements as networks - enables us to identify a specific social dynamic, which differentiates social movements from cognate processes. This can both facilitate cross-fertilization with other intellectual fields and emphasize the distinctiveness of social movement research.

A Defining movements

Few would deny that social networks are an important component of social movements. But do we really need to go as far as assign the concept of social network a central position in our theoretical and empirical work? A few years ago, a systematic comparison of definitions of ‘social movements’ by scholars from different intellectual traditions led me to identify in a view of movements as networks a potential terrain for convergence and paradigmatic integration in the field. More specifically, I defined social movements as networks ‘of informal interactions, between a plurality of individuals, groups or associations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity’ (Diani 1992: 13).¹

Approaching movements as networks enables us to capture their peculiarity vis a vis cognate forms of collective action and contentious politics, better than current dominant paradigms. Social movements are neither distinctive because of their adoption of radical forms of action, nor because of their interest in new issues, or their predilection for loose organizational forms (Diani 2000b): but because of their consisting of formally independent actors, who are

embedded in specific 'local' contexts (where local is meant in either a territorial or a social sense), bear specific identities, values, and orientations, and pursue specific goals and objectives, but who are at the same time linked through various forms of concrete cooperation and/or mutual recognition, in a bond which extends beyond any specific protest action, campaign, etc. We get closer to a social movement dynamic the more there is a coupling of informal networks, collective identity, and conflict. The more, in other words, each of the following conditions is satisfied at the same time:

- a. actors are engaged in a social conflict, i.e., they promote initiatives meant to damage other social actors, that are either denying them access to social resources (however defined) they feel entitled to, or trying to subtract from them resources on which they currently exert control;
- b. actors share a collective identity, while maintaining their own as individual activists and/or members of specific organizations. They identify each other as part of a collective effort which goes beyond specific initiatives, organizations, and events. It is mutual recognition which defines the boundaries of a movement, which are by consequence inherently unstable. Identity is built on the basis of interpretations or narratives which link together in a meaningful way events, actors, initiatives which could also make perfectly sense (but a different one) if looked at independently, or embedded in other types of representations;

- c. actors (individuals and/or organizations) exchange practical and symbolic resources through informal networks, i.e., through coordination mechanisms which are not subject to formal regulation and where the terms of the exchange and the distribution of duties and entitlements are entirely dependent on the actors' agreement. Accordingly, the ever present attempts to shape strategic decisions by specific organizations are subject to unstructured and un-patterned negotiations.

Focusing on definitions of social movements does not aim at identifying a discrete set of empirical phenomena, even less at placing them in a specific cell of a broader typology; rather, it is a way to identify the basic traits of a distinct social process, which we can then use to analyze specific episodes of contention, along with other models (see Table 13.1 below). Our task then becomes to find out to which extent we have, within any particular and concrete instance of contention, a social movement dynamic in progress, rather than other forms of collective action, and how the different dynamics interact. That's when the discriminant capacity of the concept is tested. To illustrate this point, let us look at the complex of events, organizations, activities, and like-minded individuals, conventionally labeled as 'environmental movement'.

First, the presence of conflict differentiates social movements from 'non-conflictual movements', i.e., forms of collective action conducted by networks of actors who share

solidarity and an interpretation linking specific acts in a longer time perspective, but who do not identify any specific social actor as an opponent. We might come across instances of sustained collective action on environmental problems that imply broader identities yet do not imply any conflict. A model of environmental action as a collective effort aiming entirely at the solution of practical cases of pollution through voluntary work, or the transformation of environmental consciousness through education, would match this profile. In that case, the identity would connect people, organizations, events and initiatives in a meaningful, longer-term collective project, transcending the boundaries of any specific organization or campaign, but there would be no space for conflictual dynamics.

Second, the informal nature of the networks differentiates movements from ‘organizations’, i.e., coordinated forms of interaction with some established membership criteria and some patterned mechanisms of internal regulation. We shall often come across instances in which environmental action is mainly conducted within the boundaries of specific organizations, which are the main source of participants’ identities, whereas the loyalty to the ‘movement’ as a whole is far weaker, and so are opportunities for individuals to play any role unless their participation is mediated by specific organizations. In this case we would not have a ‘social movement dynamic’ in progress, rather, the mobilization of a set of specific organizations trying to acquire full property of an issue. In the most extreme case, we might have one single organization taking full control of the issue – as the Bolshevik party or the Nazi party to a large extent managed to do in their respective cases.

Third, the presence of an identity which transcends the boundaries of any specific event, and also enables actors to connect different episodes of collective action, qualifies social movements in relation to coalitions. Accordingly, we might find that the expression ‘environmental movement’ denote little more than a set of largely independent events and activities, each reflecting a specific conflict, and each supported by a specific coalition, but with little links across events and coalitions. In a coalition dynamic, the absence of collective identity would prevent the establishment of connections between activities, located at different points in time and space, and the local networks would not concatenate in broader systems of solidarities and mutual obligations.

Finally, we might also come across a ‘social movement dynamic’ proper. In that case, individuals and organizations, engaged in innumerable initiatives to protect the environment against its socially identifiable ‘enemies’, would share a broad identity and would be able to link their specific actions into a broader narrative and into a broader collective ‘we’, while renouncing their own peculiarity. Events, which could otherwise be the result of ad hoc coalitions, and expressions of NIMBY orientations, would then acquire a new meaning and be perceived as part of a larger, and longer term, collective effort.

Table 13.1 about here

In this perspective, the role of networks is radically different from that of facilitators of individual recruitment and participation, which has been traditionally assigned to them. Rather than preconditions and resources for (individual or group) action, networks become the analytical tool which enables us to capture the dualistic nature of action. Looking at network configurations is an opportunity to address explicitly and empirically the issue of the duality between action and structure (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994; Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Mische and Pattison 2000; Mohr 2000; Livesay 2002). Social ties discourage certain courses of action and facilitate others, which in turn affect how actors attribute meaning to their social linkages, thus (re)creating rules and arrangements perceived as relatively stable and 'structural'. Through cultural production and multiple involvements, people create webs of ties that enable them to further act collectively and shape their future behavior. The origin of network ties becomes a major focus of investigation (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook 2001; Kenis and Knoke 2002).

More specifically, networks and the attached systems of mutual obligation correspond to a form of social organization with more than passing commonalities to the network organizations explored by organizational theories: independence of the single components, horizontal integration, flexibility in goals and strategies, multiple levels of interaction with the possibility of communitarian elements (Podolny and Page 1998; Gulati and Gargiulo 1999; Pichierri 1999). Of course, there are also some obvious differences, as those who have strongly associated network organizations with instrumental and/or circumscribed goals (Pichierri 1999)

would be quick to point out. However, while the relevance of the subcultural – eventually countercultural - dimension is once again variable, on the other hand, many profit-oriented network organizations also rely on identities and solidarities generated by the community (e.g. industrial districts in Italy: Trigilia 1986). Those versions of the network organization theory most influenced by neo-institutionalism (Powell 1990; Pierson 2000; Hall and Taylor 1996) are best equipped to capture the interplay between the instrumental dimension of exchanges and the flow of mutual recognition and obligations, which make this form of organization feasible.

The network perspective has at the same time some significant advantages over established theories, and the potential to engage in a fruitful dialogue with them. In relation to resource mobilization theory, viewing movements as networks allows us to get over the tendency to treat movements as organizations of a peculiar type, and therefore to address the issue of the relationship between movements, parties, and interest groups from a different perspective. Admittedly, the distinction between movements and SMOs is very clear in the programmatic formulations of the RM perspective (McCarthy and Zald 1987). Likewise, attention has been paid to interorganizational relations among SMOs, with a special focus on the interplay of competition and cooperation in a specific movement industry. However, all in all it is safe to claim that its focus is on (social movement) organizations, rather than on the linkages between them, and the processes of meaning construction which may – or may not – render them part of a broader collective effort. But if movements are organizations, then inevitably misleading questions about whether specific organizations should be approached as movement

organizations or interest groups arise, and dialogue across professional boundaries - as well as attempts to grasp the peculiarity of concrete processes - becomes difficult (Leech 2001). If we maintain our focus on single organizations, there is indeed no ground to claim that WWF is an SMO rather than a public interest group, or EF! a social movement rather than a radical grassroots organization. Identifying them as one or the other depends ultimately on the socially constructed professional identities of the researchers (on environmental organizations cfr. e.g. Rucht 1989; Jordan and Maloney 1997).

If, alternatively, we regard movements as non-hierarchical network forms of organization with boundaries defined by collective identity - i.e. by actors' mutual recognition as members of the movement linked by a distinctive culture and solidarity - then the questions introduced earlier take a different meaning. The issue will no longer be whether a specific organization is a SMO or an interest group, or whether a 'movement' has become an interest group, but how and if different actors, both individuals and organizations, with varying degrees of formal structure, relate to each other. We have social movement processes in motion, the more we observe sustained interactions between different political organizations, which go beyond a single-issue campaign but draw on, and reproduce, distinctive collective identities. If, on the contrary, the very same organizations act mainly on their own, and are the main focus for their activists' loyalties, to the detriment of broader movement identities, then we have political dynamics which are closest to the classic models of interest politics (Diani 2001). In these terms, 'social movement organization' is defined not in terms of attributes, but in terms of

relations: SMOs are all those groups who identify themselves, and are identified by others, as part of the same movement, and exchange on that basis.

In relation to new social movements theory, scholars traditionally associated with this approach like Touraine or Melucci² have contributed substantially to the understanding of key aspects of the social process I associate with social movements, namely, the creation and maintenance of a specific conflictual network (through their analysis of identity dynamics more than through that of identity in information society). Melucci's analysis of the internal complexity of collective actors which are usually portrayed - and portray themselves - as homogenous and coherent is of particular relevance here, as it provides us with the intellectual tools to identify the complex negotiations which take place between different actors in the emergence and reproduction of a movement identity. While this is a fundamental insight, Melucci's (1996: 113-117) strong association of network forms of organizations with new movements – as opposed to the more bureaucratic forms of 'old' movements - is problematic. The main analytical gain from the network perspective is that the existence of a (new) movement is no longer tied to the existence of distinct (new) conflictual stakes, and no specific correspondence is expected between the two. A network form may be an useful analytical tool to apply to both 'old' and 'new' movements; likewise, conflicts on issues of knowledge control, and opposing technicians and experts to bureaucrats and technocrats may not necessarily result in extensive networks forms of organizations but be instead carried on by informal organizations acting as experts' interest groups (e.g. Hoffman 1989).

In relation to political process theories, a network perspective can counteract their tendencies to identify movements with strings of protest events (Kriesi et al. 1995). There is of course widespread recognition of the problems attached to treating movements as aggregates of actors/events and ignoring identity dynamics and interactions within such aggregates (e.g. Tarrow 1998b: 57-58). Still, when it comes to research practice the tendency to treat movements as aggregates persists. A network view of movements places more squarely the attention on the connectivity between events, both in terms of meaning attribution and in terms of chains of actors (connected by events) and events (connected by actors). Accordingly, events falling within the same broad category may or may not turn out to be related to a specific movement, depending not only on the definitions of the conflict adopted by mobilized actors, but on the continuity guaranteed by individual activists and organizations.

A Mapping movement networks

It would be unfair to claim that attention to the interdependence between actions, identity and networks is unique to the perspective presented in this chapter. Within this book, Mische's is definitely the most sophisticated illustration, but most chapters focus on the dynamic nature of networks, even though authors might not share the focus on the concept of social movement. There are also several examples of trends in that direction, e.g. Tilly's work on culture and political processes as the outcome of ongoing conversations (2002). Where this perspective is

different, however, is in the centrality assigned to the idea of network as the basis for a theory of social movements.³ In order to build such a theory, an important task is to define parameters to identify the structure of movement networks, and then elaborate appropriate theoretical models to explain certain network patterns and/or certain actors' incumbency of specific positions. To this purpose I refer to two important dimensions of networks, namely, the opposition between decentralized and hierarchical structures, and segmented and reticulated structures (Gerlach and Hine 1970; see also Philips 1991; Knoke 1990a: ch.5).

The concept of network centralization allows us to differentiate between the informality of social movement networks and the frequently related, if misplaced, assumption of the absence of asymmetries and differences within those networks. An informal network may indeed range from being totally de-centralized to totally centralized. Although the extent to which differences in centralization correspond to differences in influence and possibly power remains to be seen, organizations most central in movement networks have been found to play a greater role in external exchanges to powerful actors, which suggests something about their potential leadership (as Diani's and Ansell's chapters in this book illustrate). At the very minimum, differences in centrality testify to a tendency of flows of exchanges and communication to concentrate towards specific actors, and thus to affect how a movement operates and builds its identity.

The level of network segmentation reflects the extent to which communication between actors is prevented by some kind of barrier. In formal terms, we may characterize it as the

average number of intermediate steps, necessary to reach any one node in the network from any other node.⁴ In substantive terms, this concept reflects the distance which separates members of a network (in our case, of a movement) on a number of possible grounds. Criteria for segmentation may vary, depending on the ties we are looking at: it might be ideological segmentation, where the relational distance increases with the difference in ideological stances between actors; or issue distance, if the decisive factor is represented by differences in the levels of interest in specific issues.

By combining these two dimensions we obtain four types of network structure (see figure 13.1 below). In the illustrations which follow, all actors will be assumed to recognize each other as parts of the same movement, and focus will be on real exchanges. However, one could apply the same logic to the analysis of mutual recognitions of identity. It is important to acknowledge the distinction between identity networks and concrete ones. While identity reflects in both '[agents'] mental models and in their patterns of interaction with others' (Carley 1999: 16; see also Howard 1994), networks of mutual recognition do not necessarily overlap with the networks which result from alliance building, information exchanges, shared resources, multiple memberships. It is admittedly sensible to assume that feelings of identity tend to be stronger among actors who collaborate on a regular basis than among those who relate occasionally, or hardly ever. However, one has also to recognize the difference between 'real' exchanges - which may not necessarily imply identity, as in instrumental, ad hoc coalitions - and actors' interpretation of their social space in terms of who is perceived as close/similar/part of

the same collectivity, and who is not. 'Who identifies whom and is identified by whom as part of a movement' is an interesting question in itself (Melucci 1984, 1996), which may lead to the identification of several network forms, regardless of whether actors actually interact with each other.

B Movement cliques

A clique (better: a 1-clique) is a decentralized, reticulate network, where all nodes are adjacent to each other (Scott 1992: 117). This type of structure is conventionally associated with a redundancy of ties, which in turn suggests a pattern of linkages with a strong expressive dimension, and a high investment in the building and maintenance of the network. There is also a very high level of mutual engagement among nodes in the network, which results in high reticulation and null segmentation. The clique is also a de-centralized network, in which there is no opportunity for any actor to control exchanges among network members. To be sustained over time, this pattern of relations requires a strong equalitarian culture. The number of ties that actors are engaged in also suggests that involvement in this specific network is likely to reduce their opportunities to engage in external relationships (obviously allowing for substantial differences in the resources controlled by specific actors, and thus in their network-building capacity). A clique configuration may result from strong ideological and/or cultural affinities between network members, with a strong emotional involvement. It may also originate,

however, from other, more practical factors, such as the strong interest in a specific issue or set of issues.

Social movements which emerge in parallel with the development of a major protest cycle, and subcultural and countercultural movements in general, are the most likely to display a relational pattern which at least for some time approximates this model. In the first case, the mounting of a fundamental challenge to established institutions may facilitate the spread of strong equalitarian and participatory identities which cross the boundaries of any specific organization and reject any principle of hierarchy, even informal (one example being the student movement of the late 1960s in Italy: Passerini 1988). In the second case, the distinctiveness of the cultural model adopted by the movement facilitates - and requires - horizontal patterns of interaction between movement actors. Accounts of movements with a strong identity like the gay and lesbian ones also suggest a similar profile (Taylor and Whittier 1992). It has to be said, however, that the very level of investment required to sustain this model reduces the chances to find examples of it in movement networks with a large population, while it may be more frequent to find it within sections of them. For example, in his study of the Greek environmental movement, Botetzagias (2000) found a strong clique consisting of the large majority of the most important environmental organizations in the country, but very sparse ties involving other, less prominent organizations.

B Policephalous movements

Figure 13.1b illustrates a centralized, segmented structure. By comparison to other structural patterns, this network is at least partially segmented, as the distance between some of the actors is relatively long. The presence of horizontal linkages between semi-peripheral actors suggests the persistence of efforts to engage actively in collective action without delegating important tasks to a few centrally positioned actors. None the less, the network is also relatively centralized, as some actors (A and B) are involved in more links than the others and are therefore in the best position to control relational flows within the network. This may in turn result in greater influence for them.

An example of a policephalous structure comes from the Australian women's movement (Sawer and Groves 1994). The difference between the organizations created after WWII and those which emerged during the second wave of women's mobilization in the 1970s was reflected in the structure of the movement network. It consisted of two components which were both strongly connected internally, but had little ties between them. The two organizations at the core of those sectors (NCW-National Council of Women for the cluster grouping more established organizations, and WEL-Women's Electoral Lobby for the more recently developed sector) did not have direct ties to each other (Sawer and Groves 1994: 451). In this case, in contrast to the Milanese environmental movement analyzed by Diani (this book), centrality and brokerage roles did not overlap. Another example of the tension between centralization and relatively dense peripheral cliques may be found in the transformation of the Italian movements

in the early 1970s. While the student movement at its very origins was originally largely a network of independent or semi-independent local action committees, approximating clique structures of relations, it was gradually controlled by political organizations with a broader political scope and a more distinct ideological profile. Organizations like Lotta Continua or Avanguardia Operaia developed special linkages to cultural associations (e.g. Circoli Ottobre, related to Lotta Continua), student action groups at high school or faculty level, groups of radical trade unionists (e.g. CUB, related to Avanguardia Operaia), etc. (Lumley 1990). While the extent of formal association of these groups with the main new left organizations varied considerably, they also maintained a significant degree of interaction among themselves and with other movement organizations in specific localities or on specific issues. This generated a policephalous structure which displayed at the same time a certain amount of centralization, but considerable levels of density.

Figure 13.1 about here

B Centralized, non segmented networks (wheel/star structures)

A wheel-shaped network (figure 13.1c) combines high centralization with low segmentation.

There is one central position coordinating exchanges across the network and acting as a linking point between peripheral components that are not directly related to each other. Incumbents of

that position are likely to exert considerable influence over the network in terms of the pooling and redistribution of resources. The lack of horizontal exchanges at the periphery, and the relatively low number of ties activated suggest a comparatively low level of investment in the building of the network as a whole. Network members are likely either to be involved in a considerable amount of exchanges with actors outside the movement boundaries, or to conduct most of their projects on their own.

This is a network characterized by an instrumental pattern of linkages, with most actors investing the minimal resources in linkage-building. Ties to a central actor are sufficient to secure easy access to the rest of the network through a minimal number of intermediate steps. While peripheral positions are unlikely to exert any substantial influence over the network as a whole, the low level of investment in linkage building suggests this not to be among their incumbents' priorities. At the same time, the very existence of a coordinating node, which controls all exchanges, ensures a relatively low segmentation of the network: peripheral nodes may not feel overtly committed to network building, yet feel close enough to share a common partner to which network coordination is somehow delegated.

Examples of wheel structure include those movements which combine a fairly high degree of inclusiveness with a low propensity to expand the scope of collective action beyond the actors' specific interests and the most obvious central political goals as articulated by the movement core actors at any given point in time. Environmental movements often match this profile. Italian environmentalism in the 1980s (Diani 1995, this book) and British

environmentalism in the previous decade (Lowe and Goyder 1983) presented a pattern of relationships where a group of core - and strongly interconnected - organizations acted as a bridge between a number of local actors, who acted mostly on an independent basis. The same actors had however frequent contacts and exchanges with actors who did not share in an environmental identity still were prepared to collaborate on specific issues.⁵ Another example comes from the women's movement in Canada in the late 1980s-early 1990s. Although 29 out of 33 major national organizations were connected to each other, the overall amount of exchanges was fairly low, and they were mostly filtered by one central organization, the Canadian National Action Committee – NAC (Philips 1991).

B Segmented, decentralized networks

This model (figure 13.1d) reflects a largely atomistic style of action within the network. It is indeed difficult even to think of a network in this case, as actors largely operate either on their own, or developing small collaborations on specific issues. They are either unable or unwilling to develop more extended and encompassing linkages. They focus on their specific and restricted areas of concern, and reject attempts by prospective leaders to coordinate their action into broader overarching projects.

This highly segmented and decentralized structure is unlikely to fit the concrete experience of any specific social movement. However, it is important to refer to it here as it

captures the formal properties of a system of interaction which reflects the absence of social movement dynamics. Interestingly, it can accommodate substantively very different types of collective action. On the one hand, the model fits a style of pluralistic politics, in which specific actors tend to maximize their own outcomes without paying any attention to broader moral constraints/obligations such as those attached to large scale collective identities. This is a situation in which movement identities are at their lowest vis a vis organizational identities, and in which loyalties go to the latter rather than the former. In such a model, specific organizations operate as (public/private) interest groups, community organizations, even political parties in several political arenas. They may well get involved in multiple coalitions, but without developing long term identifications to any of them. Greenpeace is a proper example: it may be involved in coalitions with other environmental organizations, however a) it gives priority to the organization's identity over the movement's; b) it denies relevance to the collaborative activities in which it is involved (at least in the UK: Rootes 2002; data about Italy – Diani and Forno 2002 – suggest a more alliance-oriented attitude). On the other hand, this formal model captures the relationships - better, the lack of relationships - between actors which are distinctly radical in their challenges to political and/or cultural institutions, yet do so by emphasizing their organizational, rather than movement identities. For example, religious sects - or sectarian revolutionary parties - come to operate along these lines when they abstain from cooperation with similar actors following a combination of quest for ideological purity and attempts to discredit potential competitors for the same pool of constituents. Despite substantial differences

in content, both examples reflect a weakening of the process that I refer to as ‘social movements’, in favor of processes that assign greater space to organizations as sources of agency and identity. Among our contributors, Osa most clearly identifies this model: while there were only a few ties between organizations in 1960s, in the absence of sustained mobilizations and a proper movement dynamic, the number of connected organizations and the extent of their integration grew dramatically in the momentous years between 1976-1981.

A A research program in social movement network analysis

How to translate these abstract models into a specific research agenda? Below I propose a research agenda based on four key concepts: multilevel analysis, multiplexity of linkages, time, and homophily, and illustrate how established social movement perspectives may contribute to its implementation.

B Multilevel analysis

For obvious practical reasons, most analysis of social movements focus either on individual participants, or on organizations, protest events, etc. It is very difficult to integrate all these different components into a unitary framework. Yet this is precisely what we have to do if we are to grasp the complex nature of sustained collective contention and recognize the multiplicity

of ties, actors, episodes and events which make up the empirical episodes we define ‘social movements’. One possible way to achieve this goal is through an expansion of Simmel’s intuition on the ‘duality of persons and groups’ (Simmel 1955; Breiger 1988; Diani 2000b). In a nutshell, while persons are linked by their shared memberships of social groups, groups are likewise connected by the members they happen to share. The identity of persons is ultimately the result of the particular intersection of their group memberships, while the position of groups depends on the multiple memberships of their members.

This idea enables us to expand considerably on the assumption that networks only consist of direct ties between homogeneous actors, and to start build a more complicated picture. While there is no space here to elaborate on the technical aspects of this approach, based on an elementary application of matrix algebra (Namboodiri 1984; Breiger 1988; Laumann and Knoke 1987; Diani 2002), it represents a powerful yet simple analytical tool which may allow for several distinct applications. So far, recognition of the duality of persons and groups has driven attempts to map, among others, inter-organizational and interpersonal ties in movement milieus (Fernandez and McAdam 1988 1989; McAdam and Fernandez 1990), ties between organizations in Italy (Diani 1995) or Poland (Osa in this book), or ties between different movement sectors (Carroll and Ratner 1996). It could be, however, conveniently expanded to include all the events, activities, and actors which it may be meaningful to analyze to capture the complexity of social movements.

For example, we could look at how individuals are linked by participation in the same protest events, by patronizing the same alternative cafés or bookshops, or at least sharing in the same cultural activities, or by being exposed to the same media. We might do the same, obviously with the proper adaptations, for organizations too, and chart their involvement in protest and/or cultural events. We would then be able to identify the multiple levels of relationship which may exist between actors engaged in collective activities. For example, treating joint participation in protest events as an indicator of a link has made possible to identify different network patterns linking environmental organizations, with varying centralization and segmentation, in different European countries (Rootes 2002).

Of particular interest are the applications of this logic to entities other than individuals or organizations. A most sophisticated example, which integrates individuals, events, and cultural narratives ('projects'), comes from Ann Mische's work on mobilizations in contemporary Brazil (1998 and this book; Mische and Pattison 2000). Along these lines, we could look at the role of persons and/or groups in establishing connections between events, by participating in them. For an organization, getting involved in different events implies at the very minimum the recognition of some compatibility and commonality between them; for an individual it is a reflection of how that person combines interest in different issues (even allowing for the gap between perceived interest in some issues, and actual involvement: Klandermans 1988). Likewise, we could look for a structure of connections between different subcultural activities – not to mention the even more complex case in which individuals or organizations establish

connections between different categories of phenomena such as protest events and subcultural events (e.g., when the same individuals both attend specific demonstrations and are part of distinctive cultural milieus).

B Single and multiple linkages

The approach proposed here allows to recognize the multiplicity of ties linking actors in a social movement network. How to treat those linkages is, however, an open question. One possibility would be treating them in an additive way, thus distinguishing between multiple, 'strong' ties from weaker ties, based on fewer types of connections. Alternatively, one could acknowledge the heterogeneity of network linkages when this is the case, and try to account for differences between specific network structures. For example, in the Milan environmental movement the network of interorganizational relations had a more centralized, wheel structure than the network based on multiple memberships and intragroup personal friendships, and illustrating those differences was useful to highlight the opposition between a largely instrumental model of interorganizational models and a distribution of multiple memberships which, while not very dense, was close to a clique structure and pointed at widespread inclusiveness in the definition of the identity of the movement (Diani 1995).

As usual, the choice between the two approaches is largely driven by the specific theoretical perspective. If we are mainly interested in identifying the most solid components of a

movement, then looking at multiplexity in additive terms might be advisable (commitment to collective action is often supported by strong ties: della Porta 1988; Krackhardt 1992). If on the other hand we are interested in the extent to which organizations and/or individuals mobilizing on certain issues find at least some ground for exchange, then acknowledging differences in network structures might be advisable. Of course, the model can be further complicated by including in the map mutual recognition between actors as part of the same movement, to measure to what extent specific links also carry with them broader solidarities and identities (after all, two organizations may cooperate in alliance and share some core personnel, yet still not regard themselves as part of any broader social movement: that is after all how many coalition dynamics operate – see e.g. many advocacy coalitions).

B Networks and Time

This framework also allows us to organize data with a view to diachronic analysis, the centrality of which is well documented in our book by chapters by Osa, Tilly and Wood, and Oliver and Myers. If individuals and organizations operate as links between events, then it is also possible to explore the potential continuities in issues and activities over time. Of course, one has to take into account changes in organizational identities, or in basic orientations in movement milieus, or in dominant political cultures. These and other changes prevent us from assuming exactly the same meaning for events at different points in time, even though the same organizations and/or

individuals happen to be the same. Nonetheless, this logic of analysis is worth of attention, for its potential to map flows of people and organizations across events at different points in time, and the connections between events that these establish.

At the same time it is important to remember that in themselves, the models presented in the previous section do not imply any necessary trend. In particular, I do not suggest any reframing of the 'from movement to institution' dynamic along relational lines (e.g. in terms of 'from clique to wheel'). If such a reading might fit the evolution of the radical movement sector in Italy (for a formulation of this hypothesis see Diani 1992b), it does not universally apply. For example, in his analysis of the evolution of environmental movement networks in Spain, based on data from press reports of environmental protests, Jimenez (2002) illustrates a transformation from a wheel to a policephalous structure between 1988 and 1997, as the movement specific identity strengthened, and the aggregate of local environmental initiatives led eventually to a broader political project - if one largely conducted along conventional lines. What these models offer, then, are simply tools to try and make sense of specific network configurations, and of the specific concatenations between them.

B Structural homophily

The perspective outlined here does not displace existing paradigms of social movement analysis but rather use them for different purposes. They may contribute to the analysis of movement

networks particularly at the level of what social network scholars label ‘homophily’ processes (McPherson et al. 2001): that is to say, the identification of the actors’ attributes which may facilitate the establishment of linkages between them. While the crucial element in social life may not be attributes but relations, sharing certain traits none the less encourages or constrains network building (e.g. Blau and Schwartz 1984). The problem becomes to identify what traits are more salient at any point in time, and the conditions under which different attributes may or may not play a major role. On this ground each of the current paradigms can offer important insights. Let us illustrate some of them with reference to the two criteria I have used to characterize different network structures, centralization and segmentation.

Resource mobilization theories draw our attention to how the distribution of organizational resources may affect the role played by different actors in a network, in particular, whether more central actors owe their position to a greater control of resources. Although both Diani’s and Ansell’s chapters largely support this line of argument, this need not necessarily be the case as radical movements may well develop around groups strong on charismatic leadership but weak on organizational resources. A relational version of this approach could stress the importance of existing social ties (or social capital) between groups as predictors of network centrality (as again illustrated by Diani’s chapter here). It is also important to look at competition dynamics among movement organizations as a potential source of fragmentation within networks (Zald and McCarthy 1980; Staggenborg 1986). Future explorations along these lines should be conducted in more intense dialogue with parallel

developments in organization theory (Podolny and Page 1998; Gulati and Gargiulo 1999; Kenis and Knoke 2002).

Macro-sociological analyses of social movements may also offer a significant contribution to the network perspective. In particular, theories of new social movements may help us specify the different mobilization issues that movements are campaigning on, and to relate them to network properties. For example, Diani (1995) found that organizations with a different level of interest in urban ecology issues also differed in their centrality within the Milanese environmental network, with conservation groups being overall more peripheral. Focusing on the properties of individuals, theories of 'new politics' (Dalton 1996) may also provide useful insights, e.g., by suggesting that certain positions in movement networks might be more frequently occupied by groups with a distinct class profile (whether new or old middle class, or working class). Analogous distinctions might also usefully account for fragmentation within a sector of organizations broadly dealing with very similar issues, e.g., for the difficult collaboration between middle class environmentalists and 'environmental justice' campaigners in specific localities (Lichterman 1995a, 1996). Differences in the background of movement activists have also been found to be a predictor of movement fragmentation: in 1980s Milan, environmental groups with a high share of activists with a past history in the radical movements of the 1970s shared a similar structural position in the network, and so did groups with no personal connections to that political phase (Diani 1995: ch.5).

As Mische's chapter here most powerfully argues, differences in framing strategies may also illuminate the structure of a given pattern of ties. What are the main frames held by actors playing a central role in a movement network? To what extent is the centrality of specific actors due to their mastery of framing skills, or to their being identified with a specific frame which happens to be dominant at a given point in time? And do these frames coincide with, or differ from, those adopted by actors who operate as brokers, i.e., as bridges between different areas of collective action? As Osa's chapter suggests, networks of oppositional actors, especially at times when opportunities for mass protest are limited, may well be fragmented along lines which largely overlap with differences in fundamental ways of framing conflicts and their stakes.

Finally, the contribution of political process theorists may take two different forms. It may highlight the importance of factors which shape the structure of traditional divisions and cleavages, e.g., a salient left-right cleavage is likely to influence relational patterns even in a movement which aspires to cut across it.⁶ However, political process approaches may also highlight under which conditions certain differences may prove more or less effective at shaping alliances and segmentation. In particular, movements operating in a close political environment may be expected - once again all the rest being equal - to rely more on ideological incentives than movements who have a reasonable chance of being influential through inclusion in the political process. Emphasis on ideology as a mobilizing weapon and on collective identities will be likely to affect the solidity of network forms based on mutual recognition. On the one hand, it

will make it difficult to reproduce the strong collective commitment necessary to support dense structures like the clique: organizational identities will tend to prevail as organizations compete to get their ideological standpoints accepted as the movement's orthodoxy. On the other hand, the growing centrality of ideological discourse will pose similar problems to structures which also rely on mutual recognition, but with a lower degree of emotional investment like the wheel. In one case, the network will collapse because of the struggle for ideological purity; in the other case, because of latent differences in orientations between its components becoming more salient in the new context. Both transformations might lead to segmented or policephalous structures.

A Conclusions

The view of movements outlined in this chapter challenges three popular, if often implicit assumptions (or, borrowing from Tilly [1984], 'pernicious postulates') of social movement research:

- a) that the study of social movements is tantamount to the study of the organizations active within them;
- b) that network forms of organization are distinctive of (new) social movements focusing on issues of identity rather than political change;

c) that social movements tend to coincide with the public challenges conducted against authorities and opponents on specific sets of issues.

While few would openly subscribe to such assumptions, in practical terms research is frequently inspired by them, witness the disentangling between studies of identity processes and that of organizational network dynamics, or of the latter and protest event investigations. The goal of the research program sketched here is to facilitate the development of an integrated approach which enables to translate awareness of the link between networks, actions, and identities in specific research activities. Its basic points are the following:

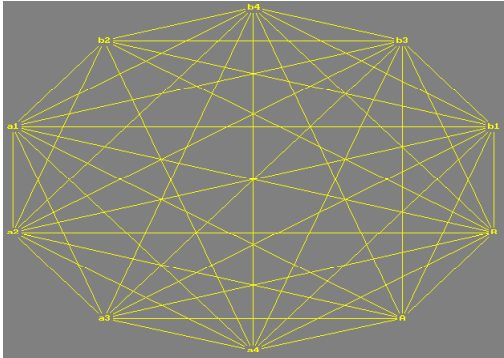
- i) recognition of the duality of network processes as a precondition to appropriate multilevel investigations;
- ii) attention to the network processes connecting events, activities, and ideas, and not only to those linking individuals or organizations;
- iii) recognition of the multiplicity of networks potentially linking different actors or events;
- iv) attention to the time dimension in network processes;
- v) recognition of the value of current approaches to social movements in the investigation of homophily processes.

Hopefully, taking each of these elements seriously will also provide the basis for a comparative analysis of social movement networks, to complement what has been achieved so far in comparative research focusing on cycles of protest and contention (Kriesi et al. 1995; della Porta 1995; Rootes 2002), individual orientations and activities (Dalton 1996; Norris 2002), organizations (van der Heijden, Koopmans, and Giugni 1992; Kriesi 1996). Admittedly, the perspective outlined in this chapter represents a peculiar, and to some extent radical, way to reorganize the insights and inputs coming from the different chapters of this book. It should not be received as an accurate reflection of a collectively agreed conclusion – to the contrary, many contributors to this book would probably take issue with this line of argument. But perhaps this is not so surprising for a book devoted to social movements: after all, it is not so rare for political or intellectual innovation to originate out of maverick and over-ambitious attempts to impose some unity and coherence where there was little. This book might not be that different.

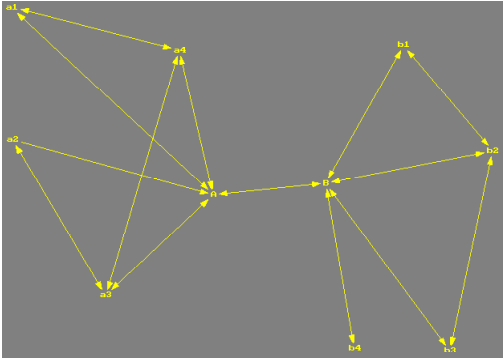
Table 13.1. Social movements and cognate collective dynamics

	Informal networks	Collective identity	Conflict
Social movements	O	O	O
Non-conflictual movements	O	O	
Political organizations/sects		O	O
Coalitions	O		O

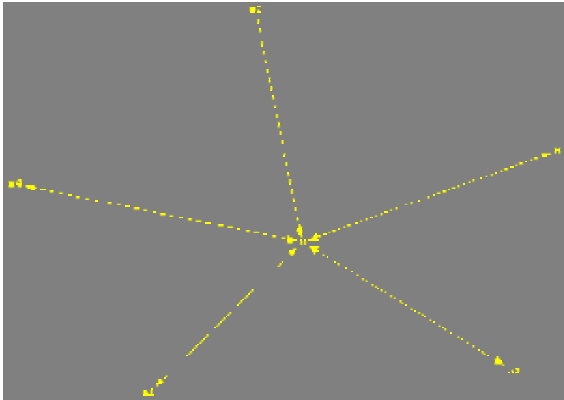
Figure 13.1. Network models



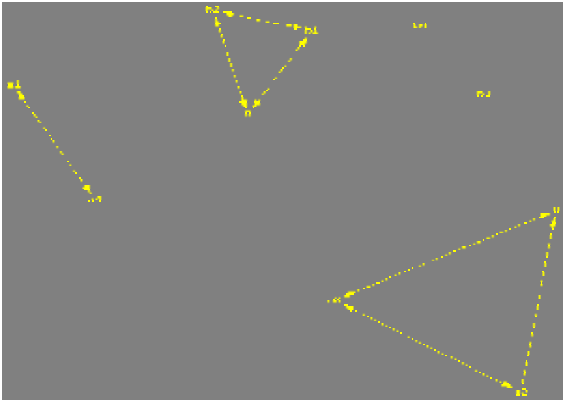
a) clique



b) policephalous



c) wheel



d) sparse network