

Contextualizing Gender
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Lecture - 39
Mapping the Theories of Social Movements

Welcome dear friends. In the previous module we had taken an introductory look at various global gender movements and discussed how influential they can be in the fight for gender equality. In this module we shall scrutinize some of the important theoretical approaches that will help us to understand the formation and functioning of social movements.

Critical theories are essential to understand the nature, directions and possibilities of social movements which can be decoded by attending to their diverse narratives and experiences values, history and literature.

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Social Movements: Theory and Practice

- Social movements have always played a significant role in societies.
 - They raise awareness about previously ignored issues and identities, enabling isolated and unorganized constituencies (who may even be unaware of their oppressed or exploited condition) to achieve consciousness, solidarity and collective action.
- As a result, social movements can bring about cultural shifts enabling subordinate and disempowered social positions to achieve active and empowered identities.
- Social movements are also intrinsically contested: their identities, strategies, and purposes etc., are normally a subject of arguments to some extent.

Social Movements and Organization Theory

Source: Cambridge University Press

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Social movements have always played a significant role in societies. They raise awareness about previously ignored issues and identities, enabling isolated and unorganized constituencies to achieve consciousness, solidarity and also realize the possibility of a collective action.

As a result, social movements can bring about cultural shifts enabling subordinate and disempowered social positions to achieve active and empowered identities. At the same, time social movements are also intrinsically contested: their identities, strategies, purposes, participants etcetera are normally a subject of arguments to certain extent.

Feminist consciousness, for example, involves the realization that many aspects of women's conditions are the effects of their dependent and yet alterable political situation. This realization is essential to their active transformation, the active transformation of women's unequal representation and positioning in the society, even though their movements have sometimes been disapproved by the masses.

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- The substantial contributions to practice of a critical theory stem from the political and practical needs of a movement.
- The first task of theory, should be not to put political instruments into the hands of already formed political actors, but rather to transform the passive human victims of inherited social structures into self-consciously transformative agents.
- A critical theory of social movements, therefore, must allow for, and co-exist with, an irreducible plurality of identities and discourses.

LGBT Rights Movement
Source: photodune.net

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A critical theory of social movements, therefore, must allow for and coexist with, an irreducible plurality of identities and discourses. Several psychological studies point out that social movements arise as a result of an individual sense of alienation from society. This is particularly true in the case of gender movements, in Bourdieu's theory practical action is produced by the habitus.

Generated in its social field, habitus conveys cultural and encoding in a non-deterministic manner. Habitus represents the way group culture and personal history, shape the body and the mind and as a result it shapes social actions of an individual or a group.

For example, contemporary collective actions initiated by women against inequality are rooted in structures of resistance, which were originally pioneered by remarkable individuals challenging various injustices that they personally faced. Stories of such individual resistance can inspire and give birth to epoch-making social movements.

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The Power of Storytelling in Social Movements

- Storytelling is often associated with the word 'narrative'. Although sometimes a distinction is made between the two, the words narrative and storytelling are often used interchangeably.
- Narrative may refer to a wider set of storytelling devices that goes beyond the traditional meaning of oral storytelling. It not only refers to the stories but also to the way a story is told. (Christiansen, 2011).
- Scholars have identified numerous ways in which narratives occur and function within social movements.
- The actors of a social movement tell stories and use storytelling devices to their advantage.



Source: uxdesign.cc



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The narrative is a vital form of movement discourse and also provides a crucial analytical model. It is a part of interdisciplinary research, including English, critical

theory, psychology, sociology, history, legal studies etcetera. Sometimes stories are deployed strategically and at other times they thrive in an unconscious manner. They often convey a strong meaning which can be interpreted and analyzed.

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- There is usually some precursor to any movement, but it is sometimes difficult for activists and scholars alike to pinpoint a movement's origins (Polletta, 1998).
- Stories of beginnings, also called 'origin stories,' are often used tactically in order to create a more cohesive and meaningful narrative.
- Francesca Polletta, an American Sociology professor, cites the example of American Civil Rights Movement which is often described as beginning with Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat to a white man on a city bus, which then sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955).
- This story became a powerful collective action-frame that defined a situation as problematic, something that requires concerted efforts to overcome.



Rosa Parks sitting on a bus (1956)
Source: Encyclopædia Britannica



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Francesca Polletta, an American sociology professor cites the example of American Civil Rights Movement which is often described as beginning with Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat to a white man on a city bus, which then sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

This story became a powerful collective action-frame that defined a situation as problematic something that requires concerted efforts to overcome. Civil rights advocates took this anecdote as an opportunity to garner support from commoners of America especially from African American women.

Movement stories of origin not only create a sense of collective identity they also help to differentiate themselves as a new and unique movement with innovative possibilities.

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Narrative and Continuity

- Narratives not only define a movement's origins, but also help to sustain movements through hardships. For example, narratives can provide a story to explain the setbacks as part of a larger trajectory of the movement.
- If movements are able to frame their setbacks as temporary obstacles in the way of its larger goals rather than as disasters, they are more likely to survive them (Polletta, 1998).
- While some movements may deny their beginnings through the use of narratives, others use narratives to connect themselves to the past.
- Sociologist Jonathan Christiansen (2009) notes that group stories connect movement members not only to past victories but also place members within an ideological and tactical trajectory.



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The famous sociologist Jonathan Christiansen notes that group stories connect movement members not only to past victories but they also place members within an ideological and tactical trajectory. Members of a group with diminished capacity tell stories that connect themselves with a more victorious past, because they see themselves as carrying on a long tradition of beliefs and glory.

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- Storytelling, therefore, can create agency, reform identity, and motivate action. *
- Stories can engage the participants of a movement, and converge thousands of individual stories into a shared story of a new organization.
- Although we can look at stories as discursive structures, the important aspect of storytelling is its performativity, in which the “text” is the action as well as word and symbol.
- This performative factor prompts questions such as: who is telling the story, with whom they are interacting, where and when the stories are being told.

* Ganz, M. (2001). The Power of Story in Social Movements. In the Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Anaheim, California.



Source:businessinsider.com Source: Britannica.com

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Storytelling, therefore, can create agency, it can also reform identity and can motivate people towards action. Stories can engage the participants of a movement and convert thousands of individual stories into a shared story of a new organization. Although we can look at stories as discursive structures, the important aspect of his storytelling is its performativity, in which the “text” is the action as well as word and symbol.

The performative factor prompts questions such as: who is telling the story, with whom they are interacting, where and when the stories are being told. The identity of a storyteller gives credibility to this story linking her with her listeners in a common journey. Social movements tell a new story and this way they acquire leadership, gain adherence and develop a capability for mobilizing resources to reach its goals.

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The Role of Leadership

- Leaders are critical to social movements: they inspire commitment, devise strategies, frame demands and influence outcomes.
- Figures like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Lucretia Mott played a crucial role as the founders and leaders of American Women's Suffragette Movement.
- Movement leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. were strategic decision-makers who inspired and organized others to participate in social movements.
- Charismatic authority is a concept of leadership developed by the German sociologist Max Weber.



Martin Luther King Jr.
Source: Agence France Presse



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Leaders are critical to social movements: they inspire commitment, devise strategies, frame demands and influence outcomes. Figures like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Lucretia Mott played a crucial role as the founders and leaders of American Women's Suffragette Movement. Movement leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. were strategic decision-makers who inspired and organized others to participate in social movements.

Charismatic authority is a concept of leadership developed by the German sociologist Max Weber. Weber notes that organizations can be influenced deeply by the charisma of its leader. Unlike the other two types of authority that is traditional and legal. Traditional authority is also termed as coercive authority and legal authority is also termed as rational authority. Unlike these two types of authorities, the charismatic authority depends on the perceived legitimacy, positive energy and a sense of greatness.

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- English political activist Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928) can be considered as an example for a charismatic leader.
- She is best remembered for organizing the suffragette movement, and helping women to win the right to vote in the United Kingdom in 1928.
- She founded and became involved with the Women's Franchise League, which advocated suffrage for both married and unmarried women.
- In 1903 Pankhurst founded the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), an all-women suffrage advocacy organization.



Emmeline Pankhurst, 1913.
Source: National Woman's Party Records



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We can refer to Emmeline Pankhurst to illustrate the idea of charismatic leadership. She is the English political activist and best remembered for organizing the suffragette movement and helping women to win the right to vote in the United Kingdom in 1928.

She founded and became involved with a Women's Franchise League, which advocated suffrage for both married and unmarried women. In 1903, Pankhurst founded the Women's Social and Political Union, popularly known as WSPU, an all-women's suffrage advocacy organization. Pankhurst's 40-year campaign achieved complete success in the year of her death when British women obtained full equality in the voting franchise in 1928.

At the threat of police violence, she had given empowering speeches to women of her time. This is depicted in the 2015 British historical film 'Suffragette' which is directed by Sarah Gavron. Let us look at a speech given by the character of Pankhurst in the movie.

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- In the movie *Suffragette*, the character of Emmeline Pankhurst was played by American film actress Meryl Streep.
- The organization that Pankhurst led specialized in highly visible publicity campaigns such as large parades.

Source: 20th Century Fox

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Source: 20th Century Fox

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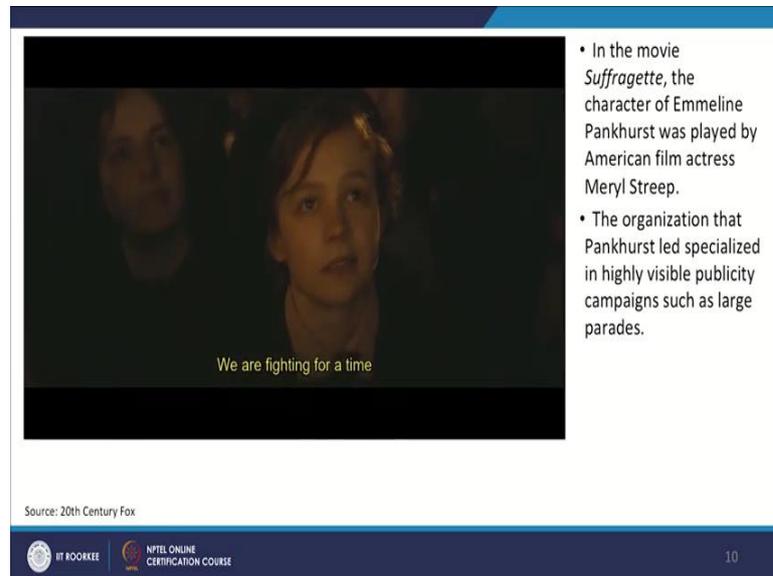
“My friends, in spite of His Majesty’s Government. I am here tonight. I know the sacrifice you have made to be here. Many of you. I know, are estranged from the lives you once had. Yet, I feel your spirit tonight. For 50 years, we have labored peacefully to secure the vote for women. We have been ridiculed, battered and ignored.

Yes.

Now we have realized that deeds and sacrifice must be the order of the day.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

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- In the movie *Suffragette*, the character of Emmeline Pankhurst was played by American film actress Meryl Streep.
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Source: 20th Century Fox

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We are fighting for a time in which every little girl born into the world will have an equal chance with her brothers.

Yeah.

Never underestimate the power we women have to define our own destinies.

Yes, yes.

We do not want to be lawbreakers. We want to be lawmakers.

Yeah.

We have been left with no alternative. But to defy this government. Yeah. If we must go to prison to obtain the vote. Let it be the windows of government, not the bodies of women which shall be broken.

Around the back. Maud. Around the back.

I incite this meeting. And all the women in Britain to rebellion. I would rather be a rebel than a slave.

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Source: 20th Century Fox

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The movie is told from the perspective of a 24-year-old laundry worker Maud Watts. Maud Watts has been played by British actress Carey Mulligan in the movie. The character of Maud meets Emily Davison a confidant of Pankhurst while she was arrested and kept in prison.

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- The Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) was led by Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters Christabel and Sylvia.
- Public gatherings under Pankhurst had the effect of energizing all dimensions of the suffrage movement .
- While there was a majority of support for suffrage in parliament, the ruling Liberal Party refused to allow a vote on the issue; it resulted in an escalation in the suffragette campaign (Tickner, 1988).
- Some of the militant ways of protest taken up by the WSPU – like stone-throwing or window smashing - were vehemently criticized during the 20th century.



Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughter
Christabel Harriette Pankhurst
Source: photos.com/Getty Images



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Public gatherings under her had the effect of energizing all dimensions of the suffrage movement. While there was a majority of support for suffrage in parliament, the ruling liberal party refused to allow a vote on the issue. It resulted in an escalation in the suffragette campaign. Some of the militant ways of protest taken up by the WSPU like a stone-throwing or window smashing were vehemently criticized during the 20th century.

But this Women's Union rejuvenated the suffragette movement in the UK. Women over 30 who met minimum property qualifications in the UK were given the right to vote in 1918, rights over their own children in 1925 and the same voting rights as men in 1928 over the age of 21.

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- In German sociologist Robert Michels's (1962) theory of political leadership, followers willingly cede agency to their leaders. The masses are grateful to leaders for speaking and acting on their behalf.
- Marx and Engels shared the view that outside leaders (or intellectuals) were required for revolutionary movements because the masses are incapable of developing a theoretical understanding of revolutionary struggle. Such leaderships can prevent legitimate movements for justice taking a violent turn.*
- Collective behavior theorists have argued that social structural conduciveness is necessary but not sufficient for movement mobilization.
- Because it is the leaders who create the impetus for movements by providing examples of solidarity, directing action, and defining problems and proposing solutions.

* Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1978). *The Marx-Engels Reader*. R. Tucker (Ed.). W. W. Norton & Company.



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In the theory of political leadership proposed by a German sociologist Robert Michels, followers willingly cede agency to their leaders. The masses are grateful to leaders for speaking and acting on their behalf.

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create the impetus for movements by providing examples of solidarity, directing action and defining problems and proposing solutions.

Large scale entry of women into universities after the Second World War increased their presence in social movements and many became feminist leaders after participating in small groups, to discuss new ideas about women's liberation in the universities.

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Gender and Leadership

- The degree of gender inequality in the community of a challenging group is one of the main determinants of gender inequality in top levels of leadership in social movements.
 - Social movement leaderships have often had a male face, with women gaining access to leadership and status through their relationships with men.
- For example, at the outset of the Civil Rights Movement, over 99 percent of the pastors in black churches were men and election was one of the primary routes to social movement leadership (Morris & Staggenborg, 2004).
- Studies demonstrate that women were heavily involved in secondary leadership roles even when they were not involved in the top layers of civil rights movement leadership (Jones, 1993; Robnett, 1997).

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The degree of gender inequality in the community of a challenging group is one of the major detriments of gender inequality in top levels of leadership in social movements. Social movement leaderships have often had a male face, with women gaining access to leadership and status through their relationships with men.

For example, at the outset of the Civil Rights Movement, over 99 percent of the pastors in black churches were men and election was one of the primary routes to social movement leaderships. Studies demonstrate that women were heavily involved in secondary leadership roles or when they were not involved in the top layers of civil right movement's leadership.

As we have discussed earlier, such disparity in leadership roles had resulted in the black feminist movements. In the past, women often function in the role of bridge leaders which Belinda Robnett has defined as an intermediate layer of leadership whose task includes bridging potential constituents and adherents. Such leaders also perform the

bulk of a movement's emotional work and may also play dominant roles during periods of crisis and also in moments of sudden spontaneity.

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The slide is titled "New Social Movement Theory" and contains the following content:

- Sociologists use new social movement theory to explain the role of social movements in post-industrial societies.
- New social movement theory refers to a new paradigm of social movement activity and collective action (Flynn, 2011).
- Contemporary social movements are characterized by strategies, goals, and membership distinct from traditional social movements.
- They aim for structural reform rather than revolution, and they do not attempt to dismantle the existing political and economic systems.
- Italian sociologist Alberto Melucci was one of the first to popularize the phrase 'new social movement'.

A smaller version of the slide is shown in a video thumbnail on the right, with the text: "New Social Movement Theory" and "New social movement theory: A theory that suggests that social movements in postindustrial societies are substantially different from social movements that occurred in industrial societies". Below the thumbnail is the text "Source: Ascend Learning Company".

At the bottom of the slide, there are logos for "IIT ROORKEE" and "NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE", and the number "14" in the bottom right corner.

Sociologists use new social movement theory to explain the role of social movements in post-industrial societies. New Social Movement theory refers to a new paradigm of social movement activity and collective action. Contemporary social movements are characterized by strategies, goals, and membership distinct from traditional social movements.

They aim for structural reform rather than revolution and they do not attempt to dismantle the existing political and economic systems. Italian sociologist Alberto Melucci was one of the first to popularize the phrase 'new social movement'. New social movements are a loosely connected group of collective actions which began to emerge in the 1950s.

The theory argues that new social movements such as antiwar environmental movements, civil rights, feminists and gender movements are distinct from other traditional social movements, such as the labour movements of the early 20th century. The old social movements clearly saw reorganization of power relations as a central goal.

While the new social movements were not about changing the distribution of power in society, but about quality-of-life issues such as having a clean environment. The core principle of earlier approaches was that protests were held by people who were suffering from structural weaknesses within the society. It could not explain that the growth in social movement was preceded by a growth in welfare rather than a decline in welfare. So, it is important to understand the form of collective action employed in these movements.

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- German philosopher and sociologist Jurgen Habermas developed the concept of communicative action to explain the situations in which the actions of the agents involved are coordinated.
- The theory of communicative action allows theorists to reconceptualize rationality and the organization of the social world (Habermas, 1981).
- He argues that new social movements develop from the tension between system integration and social integration – or between the steering mechanisms of a society and the forces of socialization and value formation.
- They are defensive reactions of individuals and groups hoping to protect, defend, or recreate endangered lifestyles.



Jurgen Habermas
Source: Wikimedia Commons



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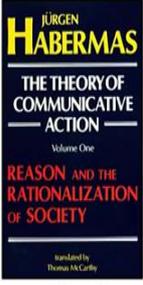
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German philosopher and sociologist Habermas developed the concept of ‘communicative action’ to explain the situations in which the actions of the agents involved are coordinated. The theory of communicative action allows theorists to reconceptualize rationality and the organization of the social world.

Habermas argues that new social movements developed from the tension between system integration and social integration or between the steering mechanisms of a society and the forces of socialization and value formation. They are defensive reactions of individuals and groups hoping to protect, defend or recreate endangered lifestyles. Habermas expanded upon the theory of communicative action by using it also as the basis for his theory of morality, democracy and law.

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- Habermas's extensive body of written work addresses topics stretching from social-political theory to aesthetics, epistemology, language and communication studies.
- For Habermas, new social movement theory, which focuses on the connections between social movements, information, identity, and structure, redefines how contemporary social movements are studied and conceptualized.
- Through his critical work, *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1981), he developed a concept of rationality that is no longer tied to, and limited by, the subjectivistic and individualistic premises of modern philosophy and social theory.



Source: Beacon Press

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Through his critical work, 'The Theory of Communicative Action', which was published in 1981, Habermas developed a concept of rationality that is no longer tied to or limited by the subjectivistic and individualistic premises of modern philosophy and social theory. He posits that communicative action can also be understood as a process through which people form their identities.

A communicative action serves to transmit and renew cultural knowledge and when done collectively it can coordinate eventual, social integration and solidarity.

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Collective Identity, Solidarity, and Commitment

- Collective identity is a widely used concept when analyzing social commentaries on gender, multiculturalism, sexuality, identity politics, and social movements.
- The conceptual precursors of movement collective identity can be found in Marx, Durkheim and Weber.
- Apart from this, there are psychological studies which describe the connection of personal identities to social groups (Hunt & Benford, 2004).
- In the New Social Movements after the Second World War, collective identity replaced class consciousness as the factor that accounts for mobilization and individual attachments.



Source: policyoptions.irpp.org



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Collective action is a widely used concept when analyzing social commentaries on gender, multiculturalism, sexuality, identity politics and social movements. The conceptual precursors of movement collective identity can be found in Marks, Durkheim and Weber. Apart from this, there are psychological studies which describe the connection of personal identities to social groups.

In the new social movements after the Second World War, collective identity replaced class consciousness as the factor that accounts for mobilization and individual attachments. Collective participation often emerges out of a sense of solidarity; while solidarity is conceptually distinct from collective identity the two constructs are basically intertwined.

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- Solidarity is rooted in the configuration of relationships linking the members of a group to one another.
- It requires the identification of collective entity and participant's identification with a body of affiliated actors.
- For example, 'HeForShe' is a famous solidarity movement for the advancement of gender equality initiated by the United Nations.
 - HeForShe is a global effort that seeks to involve men and boys in achieving equality by taking action against negative gender stereotypes and behaviors associated with women. (Herman, 2014).



Source: DIA Studio



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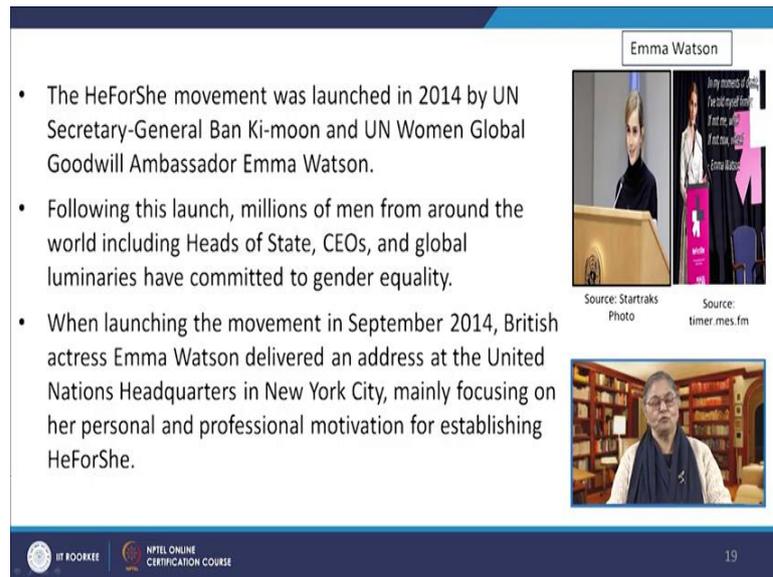
HeForShe is a global effort that seeks to involve men and boys in achieving equality by taking action against negative gender stereotypes and behaviors associated with women. The logo for HeForShe represents the union of women and men working together to achieve gender equality by joining together aspects of both the female and male symbols.

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Emma Watson

- The HeForShe movement was launched in 2014 by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and UN Women Global Goodwill Ambassador Emma Watson.
- Following this launch, millions of men from around the world including Heads of State, CEOs, and global luminaries have committed to gender equality.
- When launching the movement in September 2014, British actress Emma Watson delivered an address at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City, mainly focusing on her personal and professional motivation for establishing HeForShe.

Source: Startraks Photo Source: timer.mes.fm



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When launching the movement in September 2014, British actress Emma Watson delivered an address at the UN headquarters in New York City, mainly focusing on her personal and professional motivation for establishing HeForShe. The following video shows Watson's speech in which she calls for men and women having equal rights and opportunities and suggesting that the feminist movement should be equally supported by men.

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Emma Watson
UN WOMEN'S GOODWILL AMBASSADOR

Source: [CNN \(YouTube\)](#)

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- Emma Watson's speech uses simplistic yet effective structure whereby she states her purpose in uniting women and men together against gender inequality.
- She shares many of her own experiences as a young woman in her rise to prominence as an actress.

In this video she also shares many of her own experiences as a young woman in her rise to prominence as an actress.

“I was appointed as goodwill ambassador for un women 6 months ago and the more I have spoken about feminism the more I have realized that fighting for women’s rights has too often become synonymous with man hating. If there is one thing, I know for certain it is that this has to stop. For the record feminism by definition is the belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities.

I started questioning gender-based assumptions a long time ago. When I was 8 I was confused at being called bossy because I wanted to direct the plays that we would put on for our parents, but the boys were not. When at 14, I started to be sexualized by certain elements of the media. When at 15, my girlfriends started dropping out of their beloved sports teams, because they did not want to appear muscly. When at 18, my male friends were unable to express their feelings.

I decided that I was a feminist and this seemed uncomplicated to me, but my recent research has shown me that feminism has become an unpopular word. Women are choosing not to identify as feminist. Apparently I am among the ranks of women whose expressions are seen as too strong, too aggressive, isolating and anti-men.

If you believe in equality you might be one of those inadvertent feminists that I spoke of earlier and for this I applaud you. We are struggling for a uniting word, but the good news is that we have a uniting movement it is called HeForShe. I am inviting you to step forward to be seen and to ask yourself if not me who, if not now when? Thank you very much.

Watson achieved international stardom through her major role in the Harry Potter movies. In her 12-minute speech, she extensively talks about how she became a feminist when she began to question stereotypical assumptions that people had made about her gender.

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- Watson engages the audience by using all three modes of persuasion: ethos, pathos, and logos: She makes the audience have emotional reactions, draw logical conclusions, and trust her and themselves as capable of affecting change and promoting gender equality.
- In the speech, Watson argues that she has realized that fighting for women's rights has often become synonymous with man-hating, and that myths about the negative implications of Feminism need to be put to rest.
- The speech is also specifically aimed at engaging men and boys in advocating women's rights.



Emma Watson's address at the UN Headquarters
Source: UNWomenWatch



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Watson engages the audience by using all three modes of persuasion: ethos, pathos and logos. She makes the audience have emotional reactions, draw logical conclusions and trust her and themselves as capable of affecting change and promoting gender equality.

In the speech, Watson argues that she has realized that fighting for women's rights has often been synonymous with man-hating and that myths about the negative implications of feminism need to be put to rest. This speech is also specifically aimed at engaging men and boys in advocating women's rights.

This speech which instantly became viral online shows the attention that popular leadership can garner support movements for gender equality. Furthermore, Watson uses

her linguistic province and strategies of narrative and rhetoric to establish social relations of international solidarity, thereby empowering the HeForShe movement.

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- The strong presence of purpose and solidarity eventually results in collective action with a shared sense of agency. In their review of collective identity, Polletta and Jasper (2001), include the following points in their definition of the notion of “collective agency”:
 - An individual’s cognitive, moral, and emotional connections with a broader community, category, practice, or institution.
 - It is a perception of a shared status or relation, which may be imagined rather than experienced directly.
 - Collective identities are [also] expressed in cultural materials – names, narratives, symbols, verbal styles, rituals, clothing, and so on – but not all cultural materials express collective identities.
 - Unlike ideology, collective identity [only] carries with it positive feelings for other members of the group.
(Polletta & Jasper, 2001)



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The strong presence of purpose and solidarity eventually results in collective action with a shared sense of agency. In their review of collective identity, Polletta and Jasper include the following points in their definition of “collective agency.”

Firstly, an individual’s cognitive, moral and emotional connections with the broader community, category, practice or institution. Secondly, it is a perception of shared status or relation, which may be imagined rather than directly experienced. Thirdly, collective identities are expressed in cultural materials names, narratives, symbols, verbal styles, rituals and clothings etcetera, but not all cultural materials express collective identities. Lastly, unlike ideology, collective identity carries with it positive feelings for other members of the group.

This definition highlights the multi-dimensional character of collective identity as it includes cognitive, moral and emotional elements. It also suggests that collective identity is related to and yet distinct from such concepts as ideology, personal identity and motivation. After debates on new social movement theory in the academic circles, several post structuralist philosophers rejected approaches to movement studies inspired by modernist thinking.

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From Modernity to Postmodernity

- Postmodernity refers to new ways of thinking about thought, and argues that knowledge itself needs to be understood in a different way (Thompson, 2016).
 - It refers to the view that the institutions and ways of living characteristic of Modernity have been replaced to such a profound extent that our society is fundamentally different from modernist notions of culture.
- Modern social movements had homogeneous membership, formal leadership and a hierarchical structure, but postmodern ones have heterogeneous memberships in which members have cross-cultural and diverse social class backgrounds.

PREMODERN MODERN POSTMODERN



"Because God put it there and that's the way it's always been." "Onwards and upwards with resolute progress!" "Whoaaaaa! All the power to the people!"

Source: owlcation.com



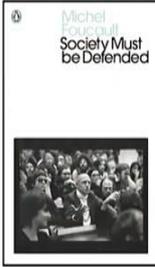
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Postmodernity refers to new ways of thinking about thought and argues that knowledge itself needs to be understood in a different way. It refers to the view that institution and ways of living characteristic of Modernity have been replaced to such a profound extent that our society is fundamentally different from modernist notions of culture.

Modern social movements had homogeneous membership, formal leadership and a hierarchical structure, but postmodern ones have heterogeneous memberships in which members have cross-cultural and diverse social class backgrounds. Besides it, under postmodern understanding of social movements, membership for a cause is not seen as permanent, and members of postmodern movements are not heavily reliant on a need for leadership primarily to avoid the conventional type of hierarchy.

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- Michel Foucault's ideas about localized power and resistance had impacted the understanding of social movements of the 1960s (Harvey, 1997).
- What Foucault proposed was a dispersed micro politics and resistance against localized and diffused forms of repression.
- While modern movements attributed importance to intellectuals in terms of interpreting goals and programs, postmodern social movements are constituting themselves.
- These movements are self-reflective and constantly interrogate themselves as movements.



Source: Penguin Books



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Michel Foucault's ideas about localized power and resistance had impacted the understanding of social movements of the 1960s. What Foucault proposed was a dispersed micro politics and resistance against localized and diffused forms of repression. While modern movements attribute it importance to intellectuals in terms of interpreting goals and programs, postmodern social movements are constituting themselves. These movements are self-reflective and constantly interrogate themselves as movements.

This general skepticism compared to modernists is in concurrence with Hannah Arendt's idea of political action being unpredictable. Arendt argued that human action, whether individual or collective, implies the possibility of creation and innovation. Earlier this week we have discussed how Judith Butler has referred to Hannah Arendt in the context of political action in her essay 'Precarity, Performativity and Sexual Politics.'

As a visionary thinker, Arendt expounded the importance of perceiving speech and political action as dynamic and dialogic with creative possibilities. As a postmodern understanding of human action and culture also contains similar notions many scholars today consider Hannah Arendt as a postmodern thinker and her work is frequently employed to study contemporary social movements.

(Refer Slide Time: 35:00)

- Foucault and Deleuze rejected all 'totalizing theories', which they associated with modernist thinkers such as Habermas and Alain Touraine.
- Instead, they advocate a view of political theory as a 'local and regional practice'. Rather than aiming for a single and seamless 'totalizing' theory of society, the theorists should be committed to acknowledging multiple perspectives, experiences and voices.
- Foucault's 'archaeology' and 'genealogy' of discursive practices and institutions contribute to this task by uncovering hidden/masked/subjugated discourses.



Gilles Deleuze
Source:
thesecondangle.com



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Foucault and Deleuze rejected all 'totalizing theories' which they associated with modernist thinkers such as Habermas and Alain Touraine. Instead, they advocate a view of political theory as a 'local and regional practice'. Rather than aiming for a single and seamless 'totalizing' theory of society, the theorists should be committed to acknowledging multiple perspectives, experiences and voices.

Foucault's 'archaeology' and 'genealogy' of discursive practices and institutions contribute to this task by uncovering hidden or masked or subjugated discourses. Postmodern social theorists differ mainly in their greater sympathy for non-recursive and non-rational modes of engagement and their embrace of popular culture over the high or intellectual definitions of culture.

Such an approach can be inclusive of latest developments and influential factors evolving in any given culture. One good example is the influence of social media on social movements.

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Social Media and Social Movements

- Social media technologies generate new ways of interacting, where users are not only able to view and use information provided on the web but also to take part in the web environment by expressing and sharing their own thoughts and ideas (Hansen et al., 2010).
- Hence it becomes an effective tool for involving numerous individuals in current social issues.
- Based on this new media sociality, today's media involve human networks that enhance connectivity, and enable individuals to share experiences and insights.
- In this regard, discourses in a society can be generated and spread through these new media (Hwang & Kim, 2015).



Source: vistointernational.org



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Social media technologies generate new ways of interacting, where users are not only able to view and use information provided on the web, but also to take part in the web environment by expressing and sharing their own thoughts and ideas.

Hence, it becomes an effective tool for involving numerous individuals in current social issues. Based on this new media sociality, today's media involve human networks that enhance connectivity and enable individuals to share experiences and insights. In this regard, discourses in a society can be generated and spread through the use of new media. New media promotes sharing of common interests and provides the public eye space to debate the issues within communities.

Social media facilitates harnessing the power of people who have similar ideas by disseminating information quickly and broadly on a network.

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- Traditional mobilization combines individual resources to establish collective power through social movement organizations. In contrast, social media garners diverse voices and disseminates information for social movements with great immediacy, supported by multimedia content.
- The explosion of social media and increased use of new technologies by women represent important opportunities to bring gender equality and women rights issues to the forefront of both policy making and media attention (Loiseau & Nowacka, 2015).
- The surge of female bloggers and youtubers has helped to attract a younger generation, who represent a key target audience to break established stereotypes and help advance gender equality.



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So, in this module we have looked at different theories on social movements and the need for discussions and debates on ongoing movements both online and offline. A theoretical approach helps to trace the origins of collective action, narrative contributions, the role of leadership and self-reflexive thinking. In the next module we shall analyze how Time's Up and MeToo movements challenged sexism, patriarchy and other forms of operation via a feminist uptake of digital communication.

(Refer Slide Time: 39:00)

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Thank you.