



**FAKULTA
SOCIÁLNÍCH VĚD**
Univerzita Karlova

Course:
Lecture:

Critical Urban Sociology
Urban Social Movements & NGOs

Urban Social Movements & NGOs

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JSB421 Critical Urban Sociology



Discussion

What urban social movements do you know? What is their role within the urban space and society?





- Usual topics: housing, gentrification, homelessness & social issues, squatting, political affairs & governance, climate change...
- Various groups -> local development; people of color, women, labor, LGBTQ+...
- Specifics in local context -> post-socialism – weaker social movements (various reasons – lower tradition of organization, various development of crucial topics – housing, gentrification, political situation)
- Interest in solving social problems within the urban space
- Central questions -> way of organization + use & modification of already existing legislation
- Gottdiener et al. -> movements *„as a way of demonstrating that, while urban policy has been hijacked since the 1970s by a governing ideology limiting public programs, there are ways to organize in order to fight for relief from urban social issues“*
- social movements occur when social actors collectively act to make claims for protective rights and to challenge the values, social norms, and institutional practices outside of conventional political channels



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- Social movements create new identities (Taylor and Whittier 1992), new forms of knowledge (Eyerman and Jamison 1991), and use a handful of strategies, such as composing oppositional narratives to the dominant ideology of neoliberalism, in order to explain their grievances, situate their claims in cultural frames, and present their physical bodies in a non-threatening manner to attract supporters and secure protections from the state (Goldstone 2004; Hohhle 2013; Klawiter 2008; Polletta 1998; Snow and Bedford 1988)
 - Citizen social movements are comprised of residents that organize to change the status quo in order to make government respond to their needs x elites possess influence through conventional political channels, such as direct access to politicians and other policy makers through well-funded lobbying (=do not have to organize into a social movement to affect government change)
 - Social movements also include more privileged and middle-class actors collectively challenging laws -> fight for better traffic controls in their neighborhoods or to demand improved police protection; more quality programs in public schools; middle-class homeowner movements that oppose social change



- Study of urban social movements -> part of broader social movements theory & studies
 - > question of mobilization in the centre, lower interest in movement's relationship to political orientation (Walder 2009) and civil society (Cohen and Arato 1994, Mayer 2003)
 - > discussion between new social movements, political process theory, different profiles between European and American sociologists in the 1990s
 - > new social movements => struggling for the rights of others
 - > Calhoun (1993) -> central characteristics of new social movements are old -> characteristics of 19th century labor movements and identity movements
 - > Castells (1983) -> theoretical base of urban social movements not in the study of social movements dominated by the question of mobilization nor in the field of urban sociology dominated by theories of social disorder and social integration
 - > specific field of research with specific spatially determined aspects



Three criteria of distinction between *social movements* and *urban social movements*:

- 1) Collective consumption
- 2) Distinct spatial characteristics
- 3) Space as part of the protest



Collective consumption

-> defined by Castells (1983) as uniquely urban concept to capture how the need for public goods that could not be provided by market solutions alone (shelter, well-maintained roads, electricity, sewage, fresh water) required collective action in order to achieve adequate supply from levels of government

=> collective consumption movements triggered by inadequacies in the government provision of public goods (subsidized housing shortages, excessively high rents, slumlords violating housing codes, access to quality public education, the need for adequate urban infrastructure – public transport, roads; health care...)

=> target – collective consumption services are unevenly disbursed by the state and/or municipal government

- example: blacks & hispanics movement -> target: adequate housing, better schools, end of police violence...; marginalized residents in rural & urban neighborhoods -> environmental targets (industrial locations)...

-> Castells (2014) – many social movements are urban social movements because „they start with urban issues“



Distinct geographical and cultural characteristics of a settlement space

- Collective consumption demands and the capacity to mobilize will vary by neighborhood or community
- Space as a reflection of society -> political and cultural variability between spaces -> some places more likely to form urban social movements rather than others
 - > conditions -> quality and type of housing, neighborhood social characteristics, demographic makeup of local population => factors of the style of mobilization, the degree of inclusiveness and the scope of the collective consumption demand
 - > cultural characteristics -> strength of the social bonds and networks in the community, the symbolic and affective dimensions of belonging, collective identity, region/place attachments
 - > sociospatial characteristics -> urban ghetto, gentrified area, bohemian district...



Space as part of the protest

- Process of interweaving the space and politics to create alternate meanings of an area's importance through the creation of public interests
 - > right to a public space, access to resources to maintain it; symbolic meaning of spaces (buildings, public spaces); existing rules on pollution...



- 1) grassroots movements and initiatives
- 2) civil society (CSOs)
- 3) professionalized organizations (NGOs)

Urban social movements – framework classification



1) Grassroot movements and initiatives

- > Bydlet – žít <http://zadostupnebydleni.cz/>
- > Kolektiv 115 <https://k115.org/>
- > Probud' domy <https://www.facebook.com/people/Probu%C4%8F-Domy/100011459762101>
- > Sdílené domy <https://sdilenedomy.cz/>
- > Food not Bombs <https://food-not-bombs.cz/>

- > European Coalition Right to the City - <https://housingnotprofit.org/>
Hausprojects, tenants syndicates, squatts, occupy
- > Das Rote Berlin <https://interventionistische-linke.org/termin/das-rote-berlin-strategien-fuer-eine-sozialistische-stadt> (colectively owned housing)

+ broader topics (gender, LGBTQ+ & women rights, anti-fascist & autonomous movement, climate movement, Occupy, anti-capitalist movement, refugees rights movement, Black Lives Matter...)











Civil Society

- > active citizens, neighborhood initiatives
- > NIMBY – „not in my backyard“
- > place attachment (Altman, Low 1992)
- > mechanisms of activation: new development, place and environment protection, neighborhood life, local political situation & management, heritage protection
- > participation in permitting & administrative procedures, participation, meetings with authorities, public space & discussion...
- > political participation (local councils, municipality), comments of strategic documents & key regulatives (Metropolitan plan, Strategical plan...), implementation
- > use of dominant discourse, engaged public, taking part in expert discussion, bureaucracy, education & orientation in legal system
- > various instruments & interests

Arnika: 30 případů změn Prahy (<https://arnika.org/30-pripadu-zmen-prahy-11>)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUi0ddG-rAg>





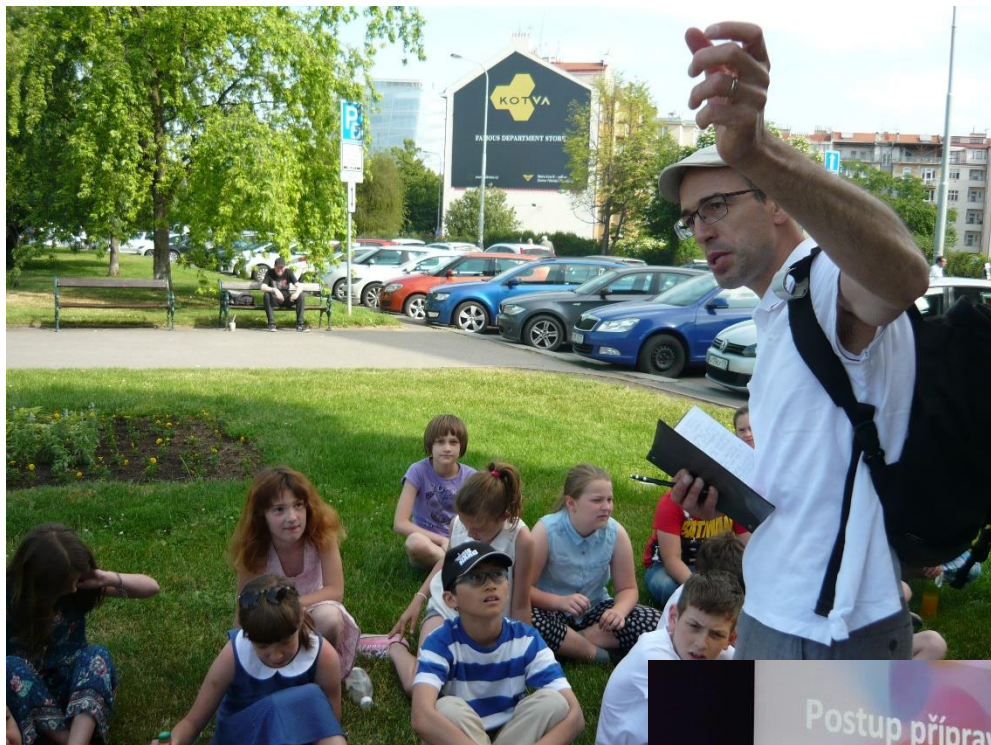




Professionalized organizations

- part/full time working agenda
- donations, grants
- media campaigns
- political lobbying
- working/expert groups
- watchdog
- research activities
- expert facilities, grassroots/CSOs support, networking
- Auto*Mat <https://www.auto-mat.cz/>
- Arnika <https://arnika.org/>
- Platforma pro soc. bydlení <https://socialnibydeni.org/>
- Bieno <https://www.vnitrobloky.cz/>
- Pražské matky (Pěšky městem)







Ending of the course

1) Test

- 4 open questions + 1 „bonus“ question on Harvey/Graber, 40 minutes, test sended by e-mail group correspondence, send back within 40 minutes
- 1st term on the last lesson (5th January), 2 retakes if needed (12th, 19th January)
- Zoom link in the moodle as usual

2) Essay

- 5 – 8 standard pages, theoretical essay; use of minimum 3 texts discussed in the course (+ minimum 5 sources in general), send by e-mail by **31st January (23:59)**



Literature

- Calhoun, C. „New Social Movements of the Early Nineteenth Century“ in *Social Science History* 17 (3): 385 – 427. 1993.
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- Goldstone, J. „More Social Movements or Fewer? Beyond Political Opportunity Structures to Relational Fields“ in *Theory and Society* 33 (3 – 4): 333 – 365. 2004.
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- Polletta, F. „It Was like a Fever...Narrative and Identity in Social Protest“ in *Social Problems* 45 (2): 137 – 159. 1998.
- Snow, D. A., and Bedford, R. D. „Ideology, Frame Resonance and Participant Mobilization“ in *International Social Movement Research* 1: 197 – 217. 1988.
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