

Social Movements

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

This tutorial will cover the topic of social movements, through the definition and discussion of:

1. Types of Social Movements

1. TYPES OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Social movements can be categorized by two measures:

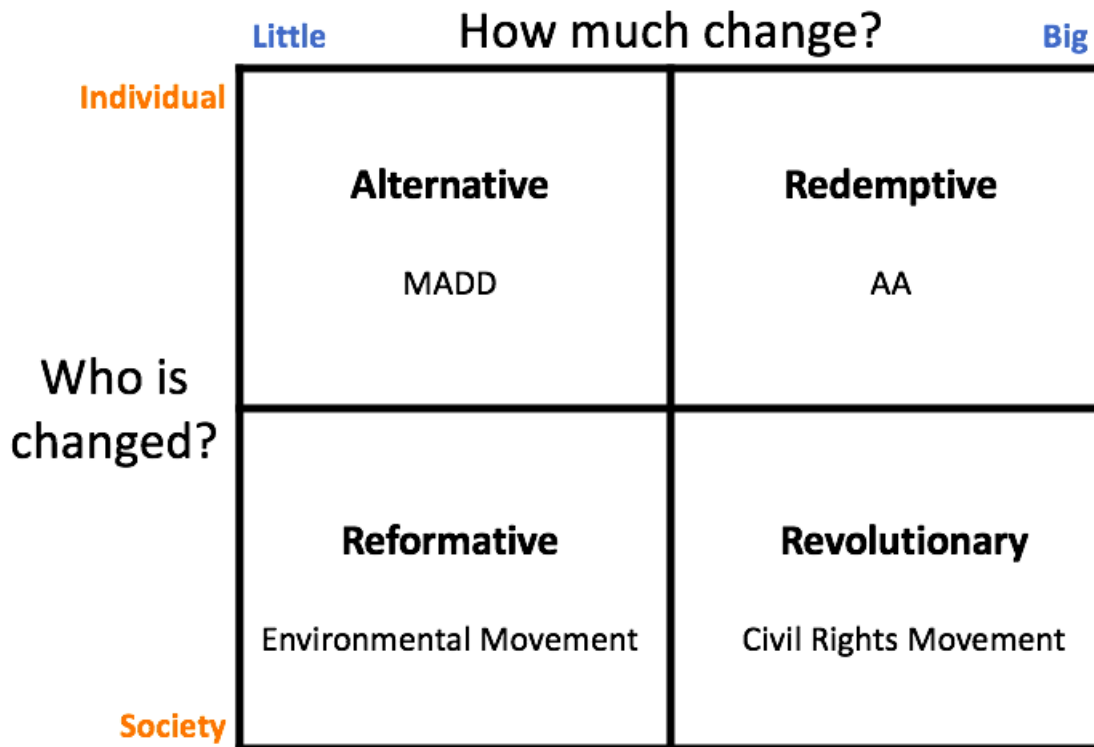
- How much change are they seeking? Are they seeking big, massive changes in society, or little changes?
- Who is changed? Who is the change directed at? Is it directed at trying to change individuals, or is it trying to change everyone, society as a whole?

You can use a typology, like the example below, developed by Aberle, to plot, or typologize, the different social movements:

		How much change?	
		Little	Big
Who is changed?	Individual		
	Society		

Therefore, the lower right corner represents big changes for society as a whole, while the upper left corner categorizes little changes directed at individuals.

Refer to the typology below to explore the goals of some specific social movements.



- **Alternative social movement:** A social movement aimed at small changes for a small number of people.

➦ **EXAMPLE** Mothers Against Drunk Driving, or MADD, is an example of an alternative social movement. They are seeking specific, limited change for individuals, by trying to get individuals to make changes and not to drive drunk. This is a specific, limited kind of social change directed at individuals, and it's not taking on big structures--it's micro-focused.

- **Redemptive social movement:** A social movement aimed at big changes in a small number of people. A redemptive social movement is usually aimed at redeeming some past damage. Therefore, in the typology above, it falls under big changes for individuals, or a small number of people.

➦ **EXAMPLE** Alcoholics Anonymous is an example of a redemptive social movement. If you've ever known anybody that's gone through this alcohol treatment or drug treatment, you know that they're making huge changes in their lives. They're atoning for past sins and redeeming themselves, which is how this movement gets its name.

- **Reformative social movements:** A social movement that represents small changes for a big number of people. A reformative movement pushes for little changes for everyone, in order to produce a cumulative big result.

➦ **EXAMPLE** The environmental movement is a reformative social movement. In its current stage, it aims for everyone to make small changes, like recycling, reducing their carbon emissions, carrying reusable bags, eating local food, etc.

- **Revolutionary social movement:** A social movement that asks for big changes for society as a whole--a massive overthrow, or a revolution. Revolutionary movements often have to upend society to have them work. In the United States of America, a revolutionary social movement is the Civil Rights Movement. It was a large amount of change for a large amount of people.

➦ **EXAMPLE** If a society transitions out of capitalism and there is a socialist revolution, this would mean big changes for everybody. Conversely, after the Berlin Wall fell, a group of former Soviet countries made the transition to capitalism, which translated to big changes for everybody."



TERMS TO KNOW

Alternative Social Movement

A social movement aimed at small change for a small number of people (i.e. Mother's Against Drunk Driving, or MADD).

Redemptive Social Movement

A social movement aimed at big change in a small number of people (i.e. Alcoholics Anonymous).

Reformative Social Movement

A social movement aimed at small changes for a large number of people, or for society as a whole (i.e. the environmental movement).

Revolutionary Social Movement

A social movement aimed at big changes for everyone in society (i.e. a socialist revolution.)



SUMMARY

Today you used Aberle's typology of social movements to typologize several **types of social movements** based on what kind of changes they were seeking--society-based changes or individual-based changes--and how much change they were asking of either society or individuals.

Source: This work is adapted from Sophia author Zach Lamb.



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