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The conscience constituent reconsidered

SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY has traditionally focused on the puzzle of the unmobilized. Why, it asks, are only some of those who stand to gain from a movement's success mobilized to join it? This book, however, examines a less well understood group: those who *do not stand to gain*, but are *nonetheless mobilized*. Why, it asks, do people participate in social movements from which they do not stand to benefit? Why and when is their participation welcome to those who *do* stand to benefit, and why and when is it not?

The usual term for such people is "conscience constituents," a term first developed within resource mobilization theory in the 1970s. McCarthy and Zald define conscience constituents as "direct supporters" of a social movement organization "who do not stand to benefit directly from its success in goal accomplishment."[1] They are contrasted with beneficiary constituents, who are direct supporters who do stand to benefit. Although the definition did not insist upon it, early presentations of the theory assumed that conscience constituents were also better resourced and more privileged than those they helped. Examples included outside organizers of agricultural or industrial labor movements, white student activists who joined African-American civil rights campaigns, and affluent liberals who led political and legal campaigns on behalf of the urban poor.[2] A longer, and still not exhaustive, list might include European liberals and socialists who joined movements against slavery and colonialism, men who fought for feminist demands, and "first world" solidarity workers in "third world" campaigns against global injustice.

Conscience constituents are significant figures in resource mobilization theories—these seek to explain social movements in terms of the

successful mobilization of resources, rather than the mere existence of grievances.[3] Conscience constituents often have access to political resources that beneficiary constituents need and tend to lack. These can include material resources, such as money, buildings, or equipment, human resources such as staff time and expertise, or the "virtual" resources of marketing data. Conscience constituents may also possess personal resources such as leadership, experience, skills, or confidence. They may have useful connections. Participation may also be less risky for them. They can speak out with fewer fears of reprisals, thanks to the resources they command and privileges they enjoy. If they have experience of other struggles, they may be able to share strategies and tactics. Within the movement, their status as disinterested non-beneficiaries can make them honest brokers in resolving intra-group conflict. Among deprived groups, with few resources and little experience of politics, their help has sometimes been indispensable in generating collective action.[4]

Although the term itself is rarely used beyond resource mobilization theory, conscience constituents are also significant in several other theorizations of how social movements mobilize support. For example, work in the rational choice tradition suggests that they can sometimes help to get social movements started when the beneficiary constituents are unable to co-operate sufficiently to do so. This lack of co-operation is quite common, because sharing an interest with other beneficiaries is not always sufficient to motivate participation. A rational, self-interested beneficiary will ask herself not only what the goal is worth to her but also how far her own participation is a necessary condition of achieving it. It may be that she can take a free ride on others' participation and secure the goal without needing to do anything herself. Conscience constituents, however, are well-resourced and self-propelled by their own consciences, so they can be a useful stimulus for collective action. Acting as "entrepreneurs," they can help "latent" movements get started or grow by providing the initial confidence or organization, after which rational self-interest among the beneficiaries can promote co-operation.[5] Conscience constituents are an especially plausible solution because, being disinterested non-beneficiaries, they are more likely to be trusted, and trust is often theorized as the solution to the "latent" movement.

Other theories propose that mobilization occurs not through isolated calculation, but as a consequence of pre-existing social interactions and networks.[6] Here too, the conscience constituent's relative privilege may be significant. She is likelier to enjoy higher levels of social capital through

being more extensively connected to others. Beneficiary constituents may be better connected to *each other*, through their common subjection to injustice, and these connections will often be *deeper* than those to conscience constituents, who are, after all, outsiders. But conscience constituents will tend to have *more widespread* connections, even if the depth of their engagement is shallower and their network more dispersed. If so, they will be well placed to connect the movement to parallel struggles and mobilize supporters on a wider scale. Celebrity endorsement, for example, can link a movement to many followers through a single conscience constituent, and "block" mobilization can bring across whole groups or organizations.[7]

Conscience constituents may also be favorably positioned in relation to the political opportunity structure.[8] Political process theories argue that the success of a social movement turns not just on the resources it can mobilize but also on its external environment, and especially the political opportunities it faces. Influential and well-disposed allies, who are not themselves direct beneficiaries, are usually named among those who form part of this political opportunity structure.[9] They are located at the interface between the movement and its external environment, which is where the political opportunities are granted or denied. Beneficiary constituents facing state structures or a party system that is closed to their input, as might be the case if they are unenfranchised or heavily repressed, may find it useful to recruit privileged conscience constituents for whom these constraints are not so pressing. The support of conscience constituents can also add legitimacy to new causes. Conscience constituents may act as introducers or mediators, providing access to policymakers, legislators, or opinion-formers. If they possess social authority, they may be able to validate a claim made by those without authority. Conscience constituents with insider knowledge may be able to identify and exploit weak points in the regime. Split elites may, as studies of democratization have shown, create unexpected openings in a formerly closed political opportunity structure.[10]

Finally, if the political opportunity structure is widened to include cultural and discursive opportunities, conscience constituents may again be useful.[11] Their privilege (if educational or cultural) may qualify them as interpreters and producers of meaning. They can help "frame" a movement's demands. They can turn an inchoate grievance into a demand by identifying it as a soluble problem (rather than an unavoidable fact of life), explaining it, assigning blame, and identifying possible solutions.[12] They may also be able to "bridge" the demand, by linking it to related

causes.[13] They may be able to guide constituents toward those elements of existing thinking that provide openings for new political claims. Where struggles concern rights to which the conscience constituents' own title is fully acknowledged, or which are based on an identity which for them is historically secure, they may be able to endorse the movement's demands with the authority afforded by undisputed possession. The conscience constituent's ability to do these things may follow directly from her status as a privileged outsider and as a non-beneficiary of the movement's work.

1.1 Weaknesses of existing theory: supply

Despite its significance to these other explanations, however, the theory of the conscience constituent remains undeveloped. It suffers from weaknesses both on the "supply" side—why conscience constituents participate—and on the "demand" side—why movements make use of them. On the supply side, there are three main failings. First, existing theory fails to explain the motivations of the conscience constituent herself. She does not stand to gain herself from the movement's attainment of its goal. Why then does she participate in other people's struggles? Resource mobilization theory and rational choice theory imply a deceptively simple explanation: that she seeks the goal the movement seeks. Since she shares this goal with the beneficiaries, she will be just as ready as they are to pursue it. It therefore does not matter that she will not gain if and when it is accomplished.

This is a remarkably incurious explanation. Without a fuller account of why conscience constituents find it worthwhile to participate, it seems a suspiciously easy answer to the problems of mobilization. In rational choice accounts, it proposes a sort of "magic dust," which handily resolves the difficulty of getting latent movements started and maintaining them through their various difficulties.[14] The "allies" of political process theory are hardly less mysterious. Some allies, clearly, are beneficiaries. They ally with the movement in the hope that its success will deliver them votes or profits. But other allies do not stand to benefit, yet no explanation is given as to why they lend their support. They are, indeed, sometimes referred to as "angels."[15]

There seems to be some awareness of this deficiency in resource mobilization theory, because it also proposes side-benefits (or "selective incentives"), such as pay and status. It may be efficient for a movement to incur the costs of paying the conscience constituent to gain what only

she can provide. But the empirical studies suggest this is at best a partial explanation. Not all of the conscience constituents were formally paid, and even those who were often surrendered more lucrative opportunities. Some were privileged volunteers who sacrificed resources, and *lost* status in their communities, when they joined other people's struggles.[16]

Indeed, the name given—*conscience* constituent—suggests that the motives are typically not self-interested, but other-directed, or altruistic. Conscience constituents are not typically self-interested allies, hopeful that a social movement will pay off for them by delivering electoral support or lucrative contracts. They are people who seek opportunities for *others*. But if conscience is the motive, it needs a fuller explanation. The failure to analyze conscience is the second weakness of existing theory. Conscience is a complex motivation, and relying on it can be costly for social movements. It is a mistake to see it simply as a useful source of free energy without considering where it comes from or what costs it can create.

Conscience, after all, is not just another individual, private preference, but a *socially produced* motivation, grounded in consideration not only of what we expect of ourselves, but of what others expect of us.[17] Resource mobilization theory and rational choice theories have long been criticized for neglecting the social nature of motivation. As Charles Tilly observes, mobilization is less about unsituated individuals choosing between selfish and other-regarding actions than it is about interactive decision-making.[18] Participation is triggered by appeals to social loyalties, identities, and expectations that are specific to certain places and communities. It is these that structure the moments of individual choice. But to understand conscience constituents, we need to take a further step. The point is not just that conscience constituents are socially motivated. We need to consider the *specific and distinct form* that these social motivations take for *them* and how these differ from the social motivations of beneficiary constituents.

In particular, we need to consider the *disjointness* produced when some are motivated by conscience and others by expected benefits. *Disjoint*, and its opposite, *conjoint*, are terms I will use frequently. If someone acts conjointly, she does something for others which (it is expected) they also do for her. Reciprocity is therefore a good synonym for conjointness. If she acts disjointly, she does something for others which they do *not* also do for her. There are no good synonyms, but the essence of disjointness is asymmetry, the absence of return, or the lack of reciprocity. The terms conjoint and disjoint can be applied to actions, social norms, and the way

that social situations are structured, as well as to a social movement's approaches and ways of working.

Beneficiary constituents can pursue a goal *conjointly*: they bind themselves together to seek to improve their common condition. Conscience constituents, who do not stand to gain, are differently positioned. They too can bind themselves, and pursue the same goal, but they do so *disjointly*: they benefit others, altruistically, doing something for others that the others do not do for them. If they are moved by moral obligations, I will suggest, the specific obligations in question apply to, and belong to, them, and not also to those they benefit. If moved by norms, they are moved by disjoint norms of service to others, not conjoint norms of reciprocity. If moved by collective identities—that "this is what people like us do to help others"—their identity ("people like us") is not shared with those they help ("others"). In certain societies, at certain times, this disjointness both confers status on the conscience constituents and puts them at a distance from the beneficiaries.

Resource mobilization and rational choice theories have also been criticized for their rationalist assumptions. It is now widely accepted that people are motivated into collective action by emotions as well as by rational calculation.[19] But here too, there is a further step to take. The point is not just that conscience constituents are motivated by emotions. We must also consider whether the *specific emotions in question* differ from those that motivate beneficiary constituents. They often include, for example, indignation, pity, and shame. Such disjoint emotions—felt for or in relation to *others*—are hard to share with those fighting a battle on their own account, whose own emotions—hurt, anger, pride—shared in common—are hard to share with the conscience constituents. This may create distance within the movement. Failure to consider these consequences of motivational distinctness is the third weakness of existing accounts of supply.

1.2 Weaknesses of existing theory: demand

On the "demand" side of the relationship, existing theory also has too simple a view of how movements decide to make use of conscience constituents. The prevailing assumption is that conscience constituents are a resource to be mobilized if and when they are instrumentally useful for goal accomplishment. But what in turn explains their usefulness? The empirical literature suggests that movements will make use of them when their own resources are inadequate to accomplish their

goal. Thus, the homeless, being weak, made extensive use of conscience constituents,[20] while African American civil rights organizations, which drew strength from black churches, colleges, and associations, made less use of them.[21] In some cases, conscience constituents deradicalize the movement they join, making it more acceptable to elites.[22] In other cases they professionalize it.[23]

These claims, however, rest on single cases, and there has been little attempt to produce hypotheses about what in general governs demand. Oberschall suggested that the more isolated a group is from social elites, and the more coherent its internal connectedness, the readier it would be to self-organize and not rely on "patrons" (such as conscience constituents).[24] That is certainly possible, but it need not be so. True, isolated groups will face costs in identifying and contacting patrons, which may deter them from doing so. On the other hand, isolation may force their hand, if they want to exert influence. Groups that are close to social elites may also be *deterred* from reliance on patrons if they fear capture. "Internal connectedness" also has potentially contradictory effects. Groups need a certain degree of coherence to function well; if they do not have it, then they may look to patrons to provide it. But, an internally coherent group may have the confidence to employ patrons without fearing that they will distort its work, and an incoherent group may not have the capacity to agree on their use.

Existing accounts of demand over-simplify in three respects. First, they take into account only instrumental considerations. They acknowledge that not all social movements need conscience constituents: sometimes the beneficiary constituents' own resources suffice. But *if* conscience constituents are willing, and instrumentally useful for the movement's goal, it is assumed that they will be mobilized. This assumption is also preserved in more recent considerations of how movements make alliances and coalitions.[25] It neglects the possibility that a movement might have other, non-instrumental reasons to dispense with useful and willing conscience constituents, such as whether their participation seems "right," or "expected." There may be other "logics of action" to consider, such as those indicated by social norms or emotions, besides instrumental rationality.[26]

It may be, for example, that the disjointness of the (useful) help offered by conscience constituents sometimes deters movements from accepting it. The resources that conscience constituents provide have not only instrumental value but *symbolic* value. What matters is not only what the resource does for goal accomplishment but also what *the provision of it*

means to the actors involved. When someone "helps" someone else, after all, much more than a transfer of resources occurs. Social relationships alter, especially if the help is offered disjointly. Perhaps, for example, "advice" from men in a women's movement carries a different meaning to "advice" from women, even if the formal content and instrumental usefulness of the "advice" is the same.

Second, there is a constructionist criticism to consider.[27] Existing theory supposes that movements decide what use to make of the conscience constituent *after* appraising their needs. But determining a movement's needs is not always simple, and nor is the appraisal of potential helpers. A movement may not be sure what its needs are, or who can best supply them. It may not be immediately clear whether something (or someone) is a resource which will help the movement or a liability which will compromise it. Are the political opportunities brought by the conscience constituent really opportunities, or are they traps? Is the framing helpful or constricting? The movement may depend on conscience constituents to tell it; with the risk that it will be told what best suits the conscience constituents. The supposedly independent, stable structure of preferences and knowledge within which movements make choices is not given. It is itself work the movement must undertake. Once again, because conscience constituents are differently situated by privilege, there is reason to suspect that their part in this work will be distinct from that of the beneficiary constituents, and sometimes problematic.

Finally, the conscience constituent theory assumes that movements only produce one thing—externally oriented demands—and that their choices and actions are oriented so as to accomplish them. But movements produce other things besides demands. They produce *identities*, by discovering and expressing unappreciated desires, experiences, and needs. They also produce *activists*: empowered persons with new or developed capabilities. They even produce *themselves*: that is, their own coherence and solidarity as a movement. Social movement theory has developed accounts of these other forms of work.[28] The "new" social movements of the 1970s prompted much of it, although the new forms of work are sometimes visible in older social movements too.[29] However, the implications of these other forms of work for the employment of the conscience constituent remain unexplored. It seems possible that they differ. It might, for example, be easier for beneficiary constituents to allow conscience constituents to voice their demands, at least once they have worked out what they are, than to define their identities, or to empower them.

To sum up: the theory of the conscience constituent, true to its origins in resource mobilization and rational choice theory, has a simple answer to the question of what motivates conscience constituents: an unanalyzed preference (for goal accomplishment) and selective incentives. That account can be criticized in the standard ways rational choice accounts are criticized: for its neglect of non-instrumental or socially produced motivations such as moral obligations, collective identities, social norms, and emotions. But there is an additional and crucial point to note. In the case of conscience constituents, these additional motivations are typically of a *specific* and *distinct* type, which is *different* from the type that typically motivates beneficiary constituents. They are, I shall suggest, typically *disjoint*, whereas those that motivate beneficiary constituents are typically *conjoint*. This disjointness sometimes has consequences for the use movements make of conscience constituents. The originating theory, which assumes movements use conscience constituents simply when they bring useful resources, therefore needs modification too.

1.3 Four puzzling cases

Because of these weaknesses, existing theory struggles to explain certain important cases. McCarthy and Zald predicted that conscience constituents and beneficiary constituents, sharing the same goal, would naturally co-operate to achieve it, while—for reasons unexplained—organizing independently of each other.[30] This is certainly one possible arrangement. But there are others. Sometimes conscience constituents and beneficiary constituents co-exist happily in the *same* organization. At other times, the conscience constituents have been a troubled, and troubling, presence, even when they organize separately. At still other times, they have been excluded, and sometimes, when excluded, they have been a troubling absence. The place of conscience constituents has also sometimes been a source of conflict *between* organizations operating in the same field.

Sometimes, for example, a movement rejects the contribution of conscience constituents who might be useful to it and are apparently willing to help. They possess resources from which the movement would benefit. Yet they are not only unmobilized—for which there could be many reasons—but actively *demobilized*. Their help is rejected. On other occasions, a movement—indeed, perhaps the *same* movement—*retains* conscience constituents from whom it is deriving no useful resources. It finds it hard to dispose of them, even while half-aware that they are a

drag on the movement's effectiveness. In both cases, the conflict does not only concern the resources that the conscience constituents bring. It also concerns matters of principle, such as whether they should be there at all, regardless of the resources they bring.

It is also evident that these divergences have not always been stable, contented differences of practice. At any moment, there may be diverse approaches within a single social movement, some organizations willingly admitting conscience constituents, others rigorously excluding them, and a variety of different relationships between them and the beneficiary constituents, from loose affinities, through various solidarities and coalitions, to fully merged work and common identities.

We therefore need to be able to understand both how conscience constituents have sometimes been present in other people's struggles and how their work has been at times appreciated and praised by the beneficiaries, and also why at other times their place is fraught with difficulty and controversy.

Here are four empirical examples of the difficult cases I have in mind. These cases will be used throughout the book to illustrate my theoretical claims.

(1) Women's Movements and Their Male Supporters

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, men could join, or even hold office in, some British organizations for women's rights, such as those seeking women's suffrage. Men, as voters and legislators, were potentially useful allies. Their political experience, connections, and opinion-forming influence were valuable resources.[31] Yet other organizations confined men to auxiliary support organizations. Others still entirely excluded them. They did so not because men were not "useful" to them. On the contrary: the resources men brought were consciously given up despite their instrumental value for the goal of winning women's suffrage.

The Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) of the 1970s also excluded men. Indeed, it excluded men who shared its goals and wanted to help. In a recent paper, I have examined men and women's support for the "seven demands" of women's liberation, using original polling data from British public opinion surveys from the 1960s to the 1980s. The results are complex, but on many of the demands, men were no less "feminist" than women and on some they were *more* so.[32] Judging purely on support for these demands, the WLM should have been composed of equal numbers

of like-minded young women and young men. The men, after all, were a resource, ready to be mobilized. But men were not part of the movement. Among feminist women, moreover, division over relations with men was also a prime cause of internal conflict.[33] Almost none of the disagreement concerned the resources men might bring to the movement. Men's participation was discouraged for other, non-instrumental reasons.

Even more recently, when men's support for feminist demands has increased, a very small proportion of British men count themselves as feminists, or choose to join, or are encouraged to join, feminist organizations. In the British Social Attitudes survey of 2005, fewer than one man in seventy was prepared to identify himself as a feminist.[34] Even men who wish to support feminism choose to do so not by saying "I am a feminist," but by wearing T-shirts that employ the third person and a claim of resemblance, not identity ("This is what a feminist looks like").

(2) Anticolonialism and its British Friends

The British anticolonial movement presents another puzzling case. Its goal—ending imperial rule—was sought not only by colonized people but also by some "uncolonized" campaigners at the colonial metropole, principally among the parties of the British left. Sometimes both colonized and uncolonized came together in the same organizations, more or less amicably. But at other times, and under other circumstances, they organized separately, or even in partial opposition to each other. Some of the colonized sought out the help, even the leadership, of uncolonized British patrons and "friends." This was useful to them because it provided political leverage in London, where the key decisions about the colonies were taken. Yet there were also frequent complaints about such British sponsorship. The resources were not the problem. No one doubted the value of British friends in helping the colonized to get heard. The problem with British sponsorship was what it implied about the nature of the struggle against British colonialism.[35]

Some anticolonial activists therefore turned down such help even when it was offered and potentially useful to them. They consciously rejected help *because* it came from British sources.[36] Others still, such as M. K. Gandhi, imposed rigorous terms on the helpers, which were intended to reduce the help they gave and succeeded in doing so. Such actions are not best explained in terms of resource mobilization. Those who rejected British help knew that they were giving up something useful to them.

(3) Labor Representation and its Professional Advocates

A third puzzling case concerns workers' movements and their use of outside help. Here too there has been a considerable variety of practice. Some labor movement organizations have been spoken for, or even *led* by, professional, middle-class advocates, with little sign of difficulty. Others, or the same ones at different times, have adopted a stern "workerism" which rejected middle-class help on principle. In Britain, the question of whether the labor interest could be satisfactorily represented in the legislature by members of other social classes has never been easy to answer. Sometimes the useful resources the professionals brought—their skill at speaking or organizing, or their connections, for example—could be accepted, and sometimes not. The acceptance did not only depend on the instrumental value of the resources.

For example, resource mobilization theory would predict that a labor movement would make most use of professional help in its early years, when it needed resources most, and least use of it when it had built up the strength to do without such help. In the British case, however, the pattern is more complex, and, indeed, almost the reverse of this prediction. The professional sympathizers were *first* pushed out, when the movement was weak and arguably most in need of their help, and *then* readmitted once it was better established. If we look, for example, at the social backgrounds of British Labour Members of Parliament (MPs), we find that the Labour Party was solidly working-class in the years of its emergence, despite the keenness of professional candidates to get selected and the resources—money, skills, organization, reputation—they possessed. Once Labour was established and needed them less, however, the professional candidates became more prominent.[37]

(4) Victorian Socialists and Middle-Class Fellowship

The fourth puzzle is that sometimes conscience constituents *sacrifice* the resources they might bring to a social movement. They give up what they have, so as to live in solidarity with the beneficiary constituents. The beneficiary constituents, indeed, often welcome such behavior. They may even require it of those non-beneficiaries who seek to join their movement. But little sense can be made of it from the perspective of resource mobilization. Resources are being *forfeited*, not mobilized.

This was, for example, the practice of some early British socialists, who "crossed over" to join the workers, giving up their wealth and connections in order to achieve fellowship with them. This prompted a vigorous and oddly unknown debate as to whether middle-class activists who took up the *cause* of the workers should alter the way they lived in order to belong to the workers' *movement*, or be permitted to belong if they did not. Some Victorian socialists—such as William Morris—felt profoundly guilty about their wealth and status, and others, such as Edward Carpenter, tried to give it up and live among the poor. However, others still—such as Bernard Shaw and Belfort Bax—thought rich socialists should live unabashed by their wealth or—like Sidney Webb—that they should dedicate their individual "resources" to collective ends.[38] Very little of this debate concerned the instrumental value of these resources and privileges. It was dominated by other considerations.

There is, therefore, unexplained variety in the use that has been made of conscience constituents. The useful resources they brought mattered, but other things mattered too. To explain such cases, we could relax the definition of "useful" or "resources" so as to capture whatever these additional reasons were. But this would be to inflate the resource mobilization theory to an unfalsifiable platitude. It would say only that movements seek to mobilize those whom they find it worthwhile to mobilize. It is therefore better to extend the theory more carefully to try to explain these variations in the use of conscience constituents, and of the complicating effects of their disjoint motivations and contributions. That is the purpose of this book.

1.4 Reconsidering the conscience constituent

There are two hypotheses I wish to develop to explain this variety. The first hypothesis is that the place of the conscience constituent has undergone *long-run historical change*. If it is true that conscience constituents are motivated by conscience, then perhaps conscience has changed over time. After all, the motivations of conscience are not eternal verities, as religion sometimes suggests. Nor are they reducible to biological concern for others, as the psychological experimenters would tell us. Biology only defines the lowest baseline for conscience. Above this baseline, which means in every respect that matters for understanding how people behave politically, conscience is the product of historical circumstances and contingencies. It has its own history and genealogy. What conscience

demands of people (or they demand of themselves) varies across time, because it is the consequence of neither transcendental religious ideals nor biological composition but of changing values, social expectations, and norms.

It may be, therefore, that the disjoint help of conscience constituents is now less acceptable than it once was. Perhaps it was a feature of the "new" social movements that first emerged in the 1960s that they managed for themselves and did not rely on outsiders for help. Several of their novel features point in that direction. Such movements were concerned with articulating the interests and identities of ethnic and linguistic minorities, women, gay people, prisoners, patients, and the socially excluded. The older material politics of distribution—concerned with the question "what ought we to get?"— were supplemented with post-material questions of identity, such as "who are we?" or "who might we become?" The new movements sought to define and protect these emerging identities and their "lifeworlds" against market pressures and the technical bureaucratic rule of civil servants, doctors and social workers.[39] They were, as Habermas put it, moved by a "special sensitivity for complex injuries and subtle violations."[40]

Given their ambition to give individuals control over their own "lifeworlds," it was hard for such movements to operate vicariously. They placed unshareable experiences and feelings above the expertise of outsiders. They were suspicious of claims to leadership of all kinds, but especially to those made from outside by the unaffected and from above by elites and experts.[41] They were attentive to what Deleuze called "the indignity of speaking for others."[42] Activists lived alongside those they helped, and worried about issues of silencing and voice and the need to "unlearn" privilege. They challenged the welfare state "ventriloquists" who tried to speak for their disadvantaged clients rather than allowing them to speak for themselves. They refused to allow the established parties of the left to unite them in a single, directed struggle. Those in whose name the activists had once spoken also powerfully voiced these concerns. Movements *for* disadvantaged groups were therefore displaced by movements *of* such groups.

Historians of the American civil rights movement, for example, are familiar with the displacement of the "beloved community" of black and white activists, who worked together on voter registration campaigns in the American South in the early 1960s, by a new politics of radical "black power."[43] There were parallel developments in Britain, which provides the cases for this book.[44] In the 1970s, in British cities, white-dominated groups

campaigning on behalf of migrant communities and against racial discrimination were substantially replaced by self-organizing groups. In the politics of sexual orientation, the earliest groups, such as the Homosexual Law Reform Society, founded in 1958, were represented by heterosexual men and women so as to maintain "respectability," but gave way in the late 1960s and 1970s to gay liberation groups, with their emphasis on self-liberation.[45] The able-bodied medical professionals and the charitably minded who presided over the disability charities were pushed out in the mid-1970s by disabled people themselves, framing their struggle as one of "rights" rather than "charity."[46] In movements fighting poverty, there was a contemporaneous shift from the old charities dominated by middle class volunteers to a more mixed sector of "promotional" and "representational" groups, the latter demanding the direct involvement of the poor.[47]

Clearly, something important did change in the late 1960s. But long-run historical changes are not an altogether satisfactory explanation. For one thing, it risks simplifying the past. There were movements before the 1960s, including some of the cases I have already described, which had difficulties with the conscience constituent. For another, it risks simplifying the present. The 1960s and 1970s were—in the United States and Europe—decades of *growth* for conscience constituents, not decline. It is no accident that it was in this period that they were first named. Conscience constituents are still prominent in many social movements today. There have also been movements since the 1960s—some parts of the global justice movement, for example—in which the privileged still speak and negotiate as self-appointed "ambassadors" for others. We should therefore pause before tracing the overthrow of the "indignity of speaking for others" and the arrival of a better world in which people finally speak for themselves.

I will therefore develop a second hypothesis, in terms of the differences in the *work* that movements do. It proposes that the problem is not entirely new. It has been a *recurrent dilemma* in the history of social movements, but one which arises with peculiar force in some types of work, and less force in others. For example, beneficiary constituents oriented toward pursuing their interests among the powerful may value outside help. On the other hand, those oriented to the work of empowerment may feel obliged to try to manage without it. To depend on others is counterproductive for the work they wish to do. The disjointness of conscience is tolerable in some types of work, but not in others. This helps to explain why conscience constituents can only contribute sometimes.

If this is correct, then we would expect to see the same sorts of dilemmas coming up repeatedly over time, according to the nature of the work movements undertake. There will still be explanatory room for the effects of long-run historical changes, because many of the elements in such an explanation have their own history and genealogy, but the changes will affect a durable and persistent set of dilemmas.

1.5 Structure and approach

The book is divided into three sections, each of four chapters. In the next chapter, I will refine the definition of the conscience constituent, and, for contrast and clarity, rename him as the *adherent*. I also define the other key terms I will be using. I then set out in more detail the second hypothesis: I propose that the use of adherents depends on two features of a social movement's activity. The first feature is *orientation*, which is the nature of the work that a social movement (or a group within it) is doing. There are four orientations: outward (concerned with pursuing interests); expressive (expressing identities); empowerment (empowering activists); and solidarity (increasing the movement's cohesion). The second feature is *ambition*, which concerns the extent of the change the movement seeks and the degree to which it presumes equality.

In chapter 3, I develop a more sophisticated account of adherent motivations, showing how their disjoint motivations differ from the conjoint motivations of beneficiary constituents. I also explore the associated costs of these motivations for the social movement, showing how these too differ.

In chapter 4, I provide some historical examples of adherence drawn from British social movements in the long nineteenth century. Using the distinctions made concerning motivation in chapter 3, I distinguish between causes (made up of participants motivated disjointly) and combinations (made up of participants motivated conjointly). I use this framework to show why the use of adherents differed between the metropolitan antislavery movement, the Chartists, and poverty relief work in the Victorian slums.

The second section of the book examines how social movements have decided whether or not to make use of disjointly motivated adherents. There are four chapters in this section, each dealing with the problems in a single orientation. Chapter 5 examines work in the outward orientation, and problems of accountability. Chapter 6 looks at problems of authenticity

in the expressive orientation. Chapter 7 considers problems of agency in the empowerment orientation. Chapter 8 concerns the solidarity orientation and its problems of belonging. In each chapter, I consider the variety of approaches taken by movements to address the problems, which I categorize in each case as conjoint, disjoint, and self-reliant. At the end of each chapter, I also return to one of the four historical problematic cases to show how the theory might assist with an explanation.

The third section of the book examines the adherent today. I start, in chapter 9, by returning to the long-run historical developments in adherence and making a conjecture about the trajectory they indicate from the beginnings of modern social movements to the late-modern present day. This takes the form of a claim that the adherent now "has to be what he cannot be." I describe the underlying social changes that have brought about this paradoxical state of affairs and provide an example—the changing nature of charitable participation—to illustrate it.

In chapter 10, I define and assess five new approaches which address the contemporary obligation of "having to be what one cannot be." They are drawn from contemporary social and critical theories, especially those influenced by poststructuralist thinking. They involve loosening the obligation to be what one cannot be; denying the impossibility of being what one cannot be, being it anyway; sharing incompleteness; and beginning from equality.

In chapter 11, I describe a sixth, emergent approach, which I term "becoming- work," and consider whether, in movements that adopt such an approach, the older dilemmas are changing shape or even being solved. I also describe some contemporary and emerging examples of the approach, in alter-globalization politics and queer politics.

In the final chapter—chapter 12—I sum up the arguments and set out an agenda for future work on adherence.

The cases I discuss in this book are mostly drawn from a particular historical location (Britain) over the last two hundred years or so. Why study the conscience constituent by means of a *single-country* case study, and why *Britain*? After all, the workings of conscience vary not only across time but also from place to place and could therefore be studied cross-culturally. The advantage of a single country case study, however, is that it holds certain things constant so other things can be compared: in this case the variety of orientation and ambition and the long-run historical change.

There are certainly other countries in which the problem of the conscience constituent could be examined. But Britain is a *good* case, because

it has such a long, varied, and well-recorded history of civic activity, for and with others. The modern social movement, Charles Tilly tells us, was invented in Britain, in the late eighteenth century.[48] As capitalism wore away traditional obligations to the less well-off, new social expectations promoted widespread public philanthropy. The middle class (thereafter always "on the rise" in British history) has, with its discretionary income and moral concern, produced conscience constituents in great numbers.[49] By the nineteenth century, Britain had a large charitable voluntary sector which delivered disjoint help to beneficiaries that was discretionary (not guaranteed by citizenship rights) and non-reciprocal (not paid back). As well as a strong tradition of charity, Britain also had an important contrasting tradition of conjoint, self-help association, in the form of friendly societies, co-operatives, and trade unions. There is also, as a consequence of Britain's imperial history, a transnational dimension to British social movement campaigning—from the antislavery movement to the global justice movement—which allows us to consider how conscience constituents have been motivated to participate in other people's struggles overseas.

My hope is therefore that, as well as developing our understanding of the conscience constituent, the book also contributes to the history of the social movements themselves, and to the larger narrative of British political history in the last two hundred years. The conscience constituent is a startlingly under-studied part of that history. She is arguably the underside of several key developments, including widening political participation, deepening democracy, the decline of social deference, the emergence of identity politics, and even the end of empire. From three angles of vision these developments are familiar: the perspective of historically disadvantaged groups, the perspective of their opponents, and from a place above the struggle altogether. To track the changing status of the conscience constituent, however, is to see the developments from a fourth, unfamiliar angle: a "liminal" position, "in between." It also allows us to see how the terms of altruism—how some are accustomed to act for others—have changed in recent British history and thus how modern social struggles are conducted. Some subjects, perhaps, are helpfully illuminated from their edges.

I also hope that the theoretical and historical analysis contributes to contemporary debates concerning the rights and wrongs of helping in other people's struggles. I have found little explicit scholarly discussion of the normative aspects of such help, but differing positions can be

extracted from recent social and critical theories, especially those drawing on post-structuralist thinking, and from the practice of contemporary social movements, as I try to show in chapters 10 and 11. Debates concerning the limits of solidarity—who may belong to a struggle and who may not—are becoming highly topical and pertinent. They are newly visible in contemporary antiracism struggles, in campaigns to define new gender and sexual identities, in campaigns against the normalizing of the body and the pathologizing of "disability" and in many other situations.

This book therefore addresses three audiences: social movement theorists; historians (especially of Britain); and critical theorists and practitioners of resistance. On this topic, each has something to learn and something to contribute.

Historical understanding of specific social movements is improved by seeing each movement not in isolation, but through comparisons and contrasts with other movements, and through a theory which alerts us to the dominant considerations in its use of conscience constituents (their "orientation" and "ambition"). Social movement theory is improved by examining cases in greater detail and over a longer historical period than is usually done. This allows proper attention to be paid to the cultural and historical shaping of otherwise abstract processes such as "mobilization" and concepts such as "conscience" and "altruism."

At the interface of history and the theory and practice of resistance, there can also be profitable encounters. Study of specific struggles, in which historians naturally excel, gain depth when those struggling are seen to be engaging with problems that are not only unique to the participants, but also comparable instances of what it takes to conduct a social struggle of *any* kind. For the theorists and practitioners of critical resistance, especially those concerned with rethinking questions of solidarity and belonging, there is something to be gained by considering historical cases. These questions are not new. They have been the subject of debate and trial for a long time, by many people, no less thoughtful than us. We therefore have a large natural experiment in how these questions have been addressed. The answers it provides are not simple, and vary greatly by context, but that is worth knowing too.

Social movement theorists and critical theorists of resistance also have shared interests, especially in considering why movements mobilize so few of those with grievances and why they often fail to achieve their objectives. Social movement theorists have focused especially on what is needed *in addition* to grievances—opportunities, for example, or frames,

or resources. This is, of course, vital. But the grievance itself needs attention too, and, especially, something that surely ought to be a core distinction in social movement literature: the difference between grievances *of one's own*, and *of others*. Here, critical theorists of resistance are helpful because they have given serious attention to the precise nature and experience of grievance. Since this involves questions of meaning, it has required them to cross discipline boundaries to draw on social psychology, moral philosophy, political theory, and even literature and theology. Such boundary crossings are necessary if we are to get closer to explaining the complexities of motivation by conscience. But the technical, organizational questions are important too, and are often neglected by the critical theorists.

For each of these audiences, therefore, the book may provoke further questions and disagreement, but perhaps also some useful insights which will help them to think these difficult questions through. If it does nothing more, it will at least have introduced these three audiences to each other, in the hope of prompting fruitful multi-disciplinary conversations.