

Cognitive direction

Social Movements

While technology, population, environment factors, and racial inequality can prompt social change, only when members of a society organize into social movements does true social change occur. The phrase social movements refers to collective activities designed to bring about or resist primary changes in an existing society or group.

Wherever they occur, social movements can dramatically shape the direction of society. When individuals and groups of people—civil rights activists and other visionaries, for instance—transcend traditional bounds, they may bring about major shifts in social policy and structures. Even when they prove initially unsuccessful, social movements do affect public opinion. In her day, people considered Margaret Sanger's efforts to make birth control available extreme and even immoral, yet today in the United States, one can easily purchase contraceptive products.