

**STRATEGIC CHANGES AND CULTURAL ADAPTATIONS:
EXPLAINING DIFFERENTIAL OUTCOMES IN
THE INTERNATIONAL PLOWSHARES MOVEMENT**

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Abstract

Cross-national peace movements are increasing as activists in one region experiment with the ideas, tactics, and strategies of groups in other parts of the world. Yet as organizers adopt a foreign struggle, they must make alterations in order for the imported movement to prosper in its new environment. In this article, we explore the international diffusion of the Plowshares movement that uses property destruction to obstruct militarism. Starting in the United States, where Catholic Left activists enacted the prophet Isaiah's vision of "beating swords into Plowshares," this controversial form of war resistance spread to Europe and Australia. Comparing the strategic changes that organizers in Sweden and Great Britain made, we discern the factors that enabled the British Plowshares group to successfully mobilize in its new context while the Swedish Plowshares movement struggled and eventually collapsed.

Introduction

For decades, disarmament movements in various regions have been working to ban weapons of mass destruction. During this time, organizers have built ties to their counterparts in other countries. These international links enable activists to coordinate efforts, to lend each other support, and to experiment with the tactics and strategies of other peace groups. The recent explosion of information technology has facilitated this process, expanding the number of trans-national and cross-national peace movements. While there is a growing literature on international activist collaboration, most scholarly works address the question of how such ties are established, how movements spread across borders, and the structural conditions that facilitate these processes (Ayres, 2001; Bob, 2005; Caniglia, 2001; Maney, 2001; Nepstad, 2001; Smith, Chatfield, and Pagnucco, 1997; Tarrow, 2005). Virtually no attention is given to the factors that influence whether these international movements are able to achieve their goals or sustain challenges to militarism.

In this paper, we examine the international diffusion of the Plowshares movement and the subsequent challenges, failures, and successes that organizers in Sweden and Great Britain experienced. The Plowshares movement originated in the United States, led by members of the Catholic Left who first gained international attention when they raided conscription offices to destroy draft files during the Vietnam War. Later, they used the same controversial tactics of property destruction to resist the nuclear arms race. Their first action occurred in 1980, when eight people entered a General Electric (GE) plant in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, armed with household hammers and bottles of their blood. Upon locating GE's Mark 12A nuclear missile vehicles, they enacted the vision of the prophet Isaiah: "Nations shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again" (Isaiah 4:2). The group hammered on the weaponry, poured blood on security documents, then knelt in prayer. They were promptly arrested and eventually convicted of burglary, conspiracy, and criminal mischief; they received prison sentences that ranged from five to ten years (Laffin and Montgomery, 1987). Others were inspired by the "Plowshares Eight" and, within a decade, dozens of similar disarmament campaigns followed (Nepstad, 2008).

International media coverage of U.S. Plowshares actions led activists abroad to experiment with this radical approach. Subsequently, movement "branches" emerged in Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Great Britain, and Australia. Yet organizers faced critical decisions about how to adapt this foreign style of resistance. Both the Swedish and British movements made key changes—altering the movement's symbolism, strategy, and organizational infrastructure—but the outcomes were diverse. The Swedish movement was unable to sustain resistance to Swedish military policies and weapon manufacturers, while a segment of the British movement made measurable gains toward disarmament. By comparing the choices and strategic changes that each Plowshares group made, we seek to explain the factors that contributed to their successes and failures.

Methodology

Our data on the international Plowshares movement have numerous sources. The first author, Nepstad, collected data over a three year period (from 2000 to 2003), beginning with participant observation at Jonah House—an intentional community formed by leaders of the U.S. Catholic Left and the center of many Plowshares actions—and at the Atlantic Life Community, a network of Catholic Left activists that includes many Plowshares participants. During this time, she took extensive field notes and conducted exploratory interviews. Based on this qualitative data, she designed a mail survey that addressed basic demographic information, religious beliefs and practices, history of activism, and so forth. At the end of the survey, activists were asked if they

were willing to participate in a follow-up interview. Almost all indicated that they were. From this sample, she contacted individuals based on their availability and legal status. Those who were incarcerated or facing impending criminal charges were not interviewed. A total of 35 interviews were conducted in the U.S. and Europe. They lasted between one and three hours; each was tape recorded and transcribed. Finally, archival documents—including trial transcripts, criminal records, movement newsletters, and correspondence among activists—were used to verify and expand on the survey and interview findings. The second author, Vinthagen, draws upon data that he collected during the nearly 15 years that he was a Plowshares activist. He is a co-founder of the Swedish Plowshares movement and helped to establish the European Plowshares network. His data consists of Swedish movement newsletters, meeting minutes, and other documents, as well as his own interviews and field notes that focus on the problems with Plowshares groups' preparation processes (see Vinthagen, 1998).

Cross-national Movement Diffusion and Outcomes

Cross-national movements, such as the Plowshares movement, begin in one country and then spread to others, in contrast to transnational movements that reflect groups of collaborating activists in various regions that share common goals and targets. Studies of cross-national movements, therefore, have typically focused on the conditions needed for diffusion. On a basic level, every cross-national movement is comprised of the following: the transmitter (i.e. the original movement), the adopter (those abroad seeking to implement the movement), and the item of diffusion (such as tactics, strategies, or ideologies). According to several scholars, three conditions are necessary for a movement to spread from a transmitting to an adopting group. First, the item of diffusion must be of interest to both parties. Second, the groups must be linked through direct ties, such as personal contact between members of the transmitting and adopting movements, or indirect ties through the mass media, or both. Third, there must be a shared identity and a degree of structural and cultural similarity between transmitters and adopters (McAdam and Rucht, 1993; Soule, 1997; Strang and Meyer, 1993).

If all these conditions are met, then movement diffusion can occur, following a five-stage process. The first step is the *knowledge stage*, where potential adopters learn of the movement for the first time—typically through media coverage of a protest event. The second step, known as the *persuasion stage*, occurs when would-be adopters consider the merits of the movement. Direct relational ties to activists in the transmitting movement are often critical to these deliberations. This leads to the *decision stage* when activists choose to embrace or reject the new ideas and practices. If they decide to adopt them, then they transition to the *implementation stage* where they organize a parallel movement in their own country. The culminating step occurs when activists assess

whether their adopted movement is working and if they wish to continue it; this is called the *confirmation stage* (Rogers, 1995).

This diffusion model has been criticized for several reasons. Snow and Benford (1999) argue that the emphasis on structural equivalence and diffusion channels has overshadowed human agency. Organizers' decisions and activities determine whether or not an imported movement will take root in its new environment and thus human actions merit greater consideration. Another critique is that diffusion can occur even when the level of structural and cultural similarity between the transmitting and adopting groups is low. Consider the differences between the U.S. and Swedish contexts. The U.S. produces and possesses weapons of mass destruction; Sweden does not. Given the Catholic character of the Plowshares movement, it is also important to note that religiosity is much stronger in the U.S. than in Protestant Sweden, where only 4 percent of the population attends church (Swanbrow, 1997). Moreover, the governments are notably different: Sweden has a parliamentary system that includes numerous progressive parties while the United States has, for all intents and purposes, a two-party system. Thus institutional and cultural equivalence is not a prerequisite for diffusion. Finally, diffusion rarely proceeds in a tidy sequence of linear steps, as this model posits. As Sean Chabot (2000) contends, implementation of foreign ideas and tactics is likely to occur only after significant experimentation, debate, and adaptation.

To this list of criticisms, we add yet another: Diffusion studies fail to explain why some imported movements flourish while others fail. The cross-national movement literature is so narrowly focused on movement origins and diffusion that issues of implementation and outcome have been largely overlooked. In this article, we have two objectives that will address this gap. First, by examining the diffusion of the U.S. Plowshares movement from the U.S. to Sweden and Great Britain, we aim to discern the types of issues that adopting groups face as they implement a foreign movement. Second, by comparing two Plowshares movement branches that had different outcomes, we seek to learn how activists' strategic actions contributed to the collapse of the Swedish movement, on the one hand, and the successful cultural adaptation of the Plowshares movement in Great Britain, on the other hand.

To understand the factors that contributed to these outcomes, we draw upon insights from the collective action literature. But while many scholars rely on structural explanations for movement outcomes—arguing that expanding political opportunities increase activists' leverage and power (McAdam, 1982; Tilly, 1978)—we focus instead on the choices that groups make. We take this approach since a great deal of attention has been devoted to understanding the impact of fluctuating political opportunities but few have examined how activists' decisions shape movement trajectories. Additionally, while we acknowledge some structural differences between the two contexts (such as the presence of nuclear weapons in Great Britain versus conventional weapons in Sweden), we note that overarching geopolitical dynamics of that era were similar. Namely, each Plowshares group mobilized during the 1990s when the Cold War was ending and

concerns about nuclear weapons were dissipating. One-third of peace movement organizations disbanded in the early 1990s because of these changes and many others significantly scaled back their activities (Edwards and Marullo, 1995). Hence conditions for organizing a radical disarmament movement in both countries were less than optimal, but British Plowshares organizers were nonetheless able to make gains while Swedish activists struggled.

If the Plowshares movements' outcomes are not sufficiently explained by political opportunities, then we must examine whether activist strategies make a difference. William Gamson (1975) argues that tactical choices—along with a movement's organization form—can, in fact, influence a group's likelihood of winning. In a comparative study of 53 movements in the U.S., Gamson found that those activists who used unruly tactics and had a centralized organizational infrastructure were more likely to succeed than those who employed conventional methods of protest and had a decentralized organizational basis. In a study of poor people's movements, Piven and Cloward (1977) concur that disruptive tactics have a greater impact but they disagree with Gamson about organizational form. They argue that the establishment of a centralized movement organization will have a dampening effect on direct action since energy is diverted from protest toward administrative work. Moreover, a movement's militant edge is blunted as organizational leaders must appease constituents and sponsors.

Aside from tactical and organizational form, other researchers suggest that recruitment strategies can affect outcomes by drawing in certain types of participants. Specifically, Zald and Ash (1966) argue that "exclusive" movements comprised of homogeneous members are more likely to succeed than "inclusive" movements with heterogeneous participants. Inclusive movements require minimal levels of involvement and only a general degree of support while exclusive movements permeate all aspects of activists' lives and demand greater commitment. Since exclusive movements make higher demands on participants, few are likely to join. Those who do join tend to be like-minded, extraordinarily devoted to the movement's goals, and willing to do whatever is necessary to achieve them. Consequently, these recruits are unlikely to give up the struggle and their commonalities reduce the likelihood of internal disputes that can bring a movement to an abrupt halt. On a similar note, Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1968) and Donatella della Porta (1992) note that exclusive movements may also experience greater longevity than inclusive ones since they often require their members to make serious sacrifices. By paying a high price for participation, these individuals often have a greater stake in the movement's outcome since failure would undermine the significance of these sacrifices.

Comparing the Swedish and British Plowshares movements, we will examine how these factors influenced the groups' outcomes. Specifically, we will assess: 1) how experimentation with the U.S. Plowshares movement's tactics and organizational form shaped the likelihood of successful cultural adaptation; 2) how strategic choices to change the activist base (from homogeneous to heterogeneous) affected the ability to

mobilize; and 3) whether tactical alterations (that lowered the costs of participation) impeded or facilitated their level of success.

As we explore the British and Swedish Plowshares movements' divergent experiences, we define "success" in two ways: 1) the ability of the adopting movement to mobilize and sustain action in its new context over time; and 2) the achievement of observable changes in governmental stances and/or the broader population's opinion on military policies. Some may criticize our willingness to define a disarmament movement as "successful" merely for sustaining action over time. Similarly, others may question whether modest changes in public opinion really constitute a significant gain when such achievements fall considerably short of the end goal of dismantling all weaponry. While social movements rarely attain all of their aims, we nonetheless maintain that it is valuable to examine how some groups make progress toward their visions, even if it occurs in small increments. Additionally, some scholars argue that sustaining protest over time is valuable in itself. For example, Taylor (1989) observed that only a small cadre of U.S. feminists were active from 1945-1960. During this time, activists were primarily focused on movement survival. Although they did not make other gains, these women served an important linking function—keeping alive the collective identity, ideology, and tactical repertoire of the women's movement—which subsequently facilitated the emergence of second-wave feminism in the 1960s. We believe that future peace movements are also likely to benefit from the experiences and skills of earlier ones; consequently, we claim that sustained resistance to militarism is a legitimate measure of success.

Plowshares Movement Background

The U.S. Plowshares movement emerged from a tradition of radical, pacifist Catholicism. Plowshares organizers were strongly influenced by the life and work of Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker movement. Starting in the 1930s, Day established "houses of hospitality" that offer shelter and food to the destitute. Yet she never considered these daily works of mercy enough; she argued that the causes of poverty and homelessness need to be addressed and this would require a comprehensive social revolution (Klejment and Roberts, 1996). Toward that goal, Day began to nonviolently challenge exploitive labor policies and the rapid growth of militarism, which she maintained was incompatible with Christ's mandate to love one's enemies. During the Vietnam War, her strong nonviolent stance inspired a number of young Catholics to burn draft cards and refuse conscription. Soon, other Catholics argued that protesting the war was not enough; they must actively resist it. Chief among them was Father Philip Berrigan, who initiated the first draft board raid in which he and others poured blood over conscripts' files. Shortly thereafter, he and his brother, Father Daniel Berrigan, burned draft files with napalm. Subsequently, these brother priests became ardent proponents of

radical nonviolent action that would obstruct the U.S. government's capacity to wage war. Many listened to their appeals and dozens of other draft board raids followed (Forest, 1997; McNeal, 1992; Meconis, 1979).

Naturally, these tactics of property destruction were highly controversial and many—both within the Catholic Church and the broader peace movement—demanded justification for these actions. As people of faith, the Berrigans and their supporters turned to scripture, stating that Christ had also taken provocative, confrontational action in situations of injustice. In particular, they cited the story of Christ cleansing the Temple. He targeted the Jerusalem Temple, they argue, because it was a place where the poor were exploited in the name of God. Worshipers were encouraged, virtually required, to purchase an expensive sacrificial lamb or dove so that one's prayer would be pure and acceptable to God. If someone could not afford this, bankers were on hand to loan money at exorbitant interest rates (Kellerman, 1987). This transformed the site from a place of worship into a bank that tracked debts and financed credit, or, in Jesus' words, it turned a "house of prayer into a den of thieves" (Mark 11:17). Outraged by this oppression, Christ drove the moneychangers and their animals out and shut the temple down. U.S. Catholic resisters note that he did not merely advocate for lower prices or interest rate reform; he challenged the entire system and disrupted business as usual.

Not everyone was persuaded by this scriptural justification but the Berrigans nonetheless continued to work against war, even as they served prison terms for the draft raids. When they were released, they planned to use these controversial tactics again, but felt that a life of high-risk activism required strong support; thus they began building and linking intentional resistance communities. They formed Jonah House, modeled after the Catholic Worker communities where all residents live in voluntary poverty and pool their resources. They also started organizing retreats for members of various resistance communities on the East Coast; these retreats eventually formed a network known as the Atlantic Life Community.

During this time, the Berrigans looked for a new opportunity to use their radical nonviolent tactics to impede the escalating arms race. They found it when someone suggested entering the General Electric (GE) plant outside Philadelphia that was producing nuclear warheads. The Berrigans and others decided to enact the biblical prophesy of "beating swords into plowshares" by damaging the warheads with household hammers. Since the GE action in 1980, roughly 50 Plowshares actions have occurred across the United States.

One campaign took place in 1983 at the Griffiss Air Force base near Syracuse, New York, where several Plowshares activists spilled blood and hammered upon B-52 bombers equipped with nuclear Cruise missiles. When the activists went to trial, a Swede named Per Hergren—who was living in Syracuse on an international peace organization exchange program—followed the trial closely. Although he had seen a documentary on the General Electric action, Hergren knew little about the Plowshares movement at that point. He quickly learned more as he attended support rallies for the Griffiss activists and

met other Plowshares participants. It did not take long before Herngren decided to join the movement and, in 1984, he and seven others destroyed parts of a Patriot missile launcher at a Martin Marietta plant in Florida (Herngren, 1993; Laffin, 2003). Swedish news agencies covered Herngren's action and trial extensively. When he was deported a year later, he was fairly well known in Sweden and received considerable support. Encouraged by this response, Herngren and other activists began planning a Swedish Plowshares movement (Nepstad, 2008).

The Swedish Plowshares Movement

Using the 5-stage diffusion model as a starting point, we can see how Plowshares activism spread from the United States to Sweden. The first stage, i.e. the *knowledge step*, entailed the initial transmission of information about the Plowshares movement. This occurred through the indirect ties of media coverage, including the documentary film *Inside the King of Prussia* that Herngren saw before moving to the U.S. Then, after Herngren took part in a Plowshares action, the news reports of his case disseminated information even further. Upon returning to Sweden, Herngren served as a direct link to the U.S. movement since he had personal contact with Jonah House, the Atlantic Life Community, and other Plowshares activists. But the mere presence of diffusion channels does not explain the emergence of the Swedish movement. Human agency is key here, as activists attempted in the *persuasion stage* to convince others to adopt this foreign-born movement. In Sweden, this occurred as Herngren initiated conversations within the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation, activist Gunn-Marie Carlsson spoke with members of a national women's peace organization, and Stellan Vinthagen traveled to various peace camps—semi-permanent encampments close to military bases, from which activists carried out protests. Eventually a small group chose to adopt Plowshares ideas and practices in their struggle against weapons sales, in which Sweden ranks as one of the ten largest weapons exporters in the world.

Yet the *implementation stage* turned out to be challenging: Swedish organizers realized that they could not model themselves completely after the U.S. movement since they were operating in a far more secular culture and were challenging a different type of government. They had to decide which elements of the original movement—its symbols, operational policies, organizational form, strategy, and tactics—they wished to retain, change, or eliminate.

Movement Symbolism

Early on, Swedish organizers noted that the Catholic symbolism of U.S. Plowshares practices would not resonate in their historically Protestant but largely secular nation. After some experimentation, they dropped much of the Christian symbolism,

especially the pouring of blood. One activist described an unsuccessful attempt to use this symbol:

[I]n the U.S., blood is used as a symbol in connection with the disarmament of weapons. The blood comes from the activists themselves and is poured from babies' bottles over the weapons and other equipment.... In Sweden, blood has been very scarcely used in civil disobedience actions. One group used pig's blood in an action.... When the guard dogs arrived it became quite nasty. The dogs became tense and aggressive from the smell of pig's blood. The action didn't work very well... It is difficult to say how people understand the symbols in an action. However, I think blood can actually be dangerous from a contamination point of view and it gives also associations to religious fanaticism, which creates an unnecessary polarization to the opponent (Leander, 1997: 12).

In the end, they agreed that the only symbolism that was essential was the use of household tools to disarm weaponry (Vinthagen files).

The Swedish activists also altered the symbolic significance of their campaigns since they wanted a less religious message. Organizers did not see their task as prophetic enactment or replication of Christ's temple action but rather a challenge to the culture of obedience that enables militarism to continue. They hoped to convince their fellow citizens that they do, in fact, have the power to change these policies and practices if they are willing to take responsibility and pay the price for disarmament. Herngren explains:

It is considered self-evident that only governments in disarmament negotiations can decide which weapons should be destroyed. When workers at a weapons factory or other people suddenly start disarming weapons on their own, our view of what is possible and who can act changes.... In Plowshares actions, we use hammers to disarm weapons. My hammer symbolized for me the paradox of militarism. A Pershing II missile can annihilate my home town of Gothenburg, Sweden. There are no weapons that could stop such an attack. But my small, ridiculous hammer made it impossible to fire that particular missile. And similarly, it isn't raw strength that can stop the arms race.... The arms race could not continue without the obedience of citizens, which is caused mainly by people's fear of the consequences of disobedience. Therefore, vulnerability to the consequences becomes the prerequisite of breaking obedience's hold on us (Herngren, 1993: 13-14).

The message of civilian responsibility for disarmament also led Swedish organizers away from scriptural justifications of these tactics. Instead, they made stronger reference to the ideas of Thoreau, Gandhi, and international law, which states that citizens have an obligation to intervene when their government is committing crimes against humanity. In short, a shift in the movement's message necessitated a shift in their ideological justifications.

Operational Policies

Another difference that activists faced is that the U.S. and Swedish governments handle radical movements differently and the levels of state-sponsored repression varied significantly across these two contexts. This gave Swedish activists the option to plan their campaigns in secret, as their American counterparts do, or operate openly. Inspired by Gandhi's principle of openness, they decided to inform the police and weapons producers in advance about their campaign. And, in contrast to the U.S. practice of inviting only trusted individuals to participate, Swedish activists sent announcements that new Plowshares groups were forming and were open to all. They also integrated interested family members and relatives into the preparation process, giving them a chance to voice their concerns before the actions. They hoped this openness would facilitate greater dialogue with family, friends, and opponents about the need for disarmament. Yet such openness was only possible because the Swedish government is less repressive. One Swedish activist explains how the different political context enabled them to make this change.

Part of the explanation is that the differences in the Plowshares movements mirror the differences between the American and Swedish societies. Sentences are much longer in the U.S. and conspiracy charges are common, and it presents itself immediately to let as few people as possible know anything about actions beforehand. Conspiracy charges mean that people are charged ... for having the knowledge that an action is being planned but not going to the police with that information. Many people in the American Plowshares movement think it is irresponsible to let people, who themselves have not chosen to take the risk, know about an action beforehand. One way of coping with this [here] is to let the action be public in advance (except the date). When I told my father I was planning to do a Plowshares action, his response was to call the police to stop it. "Go ahead," I said. "We have already contacted them" (Leander, 1997: 11).

Despite the fact that authorities did press conspiracy charges in a few cases, resulting in one-year prison sentences for some supporters, Swedish activists continued this policy of openness.

Organizational Infrastructure and Leadership

While Swedish organizers altered Plowshares symbols and operational policies, they initially adopted a movement infrastructure that closely reflected the U.S. model of combining local resistance communities with a network of activists who regularly meet for retreats. In 1989, Swedish organizers founded *Omega*, an intentional resistance community. Although communes are rare in Sweden, the idea was directly inspired by

Jonah House in the United States. In a 2003 interview with the first author, Vinthagen explained:

The major influence [on community building] definitely came from the U.S. Plowshares movement. It grows from our commitment to creating a movement that is able to sustain itself for decades.... The only thing that makes that possible is if you are able to sustain a life of resistance and ... I can't really imagine how that is ever possible on an individual basis when you live a normal, bourgeois life and you need to sustain yourself in this capitalist society. So you need to create your own society.... [with] an alternative economy, childrearing, other kinds of schools, all that stuff in order to be able to challenge these powerful forces that sustain the power structures of today.

Complementing the *Omega* community was a group of activists who lived in the surrounding area. Since not everyone wanted to reside in an intentional community or engage in civil disobedience, this affiliated group provided support to the movement without full involvement in *Omega* or a Plowshares action. In the early 1990s, roughly 50 to 60 people moved to the area to be involved with one of these two communities.

Although *Omega* was modeled after the U.S. Plowshares resistance communities, its founders had to nonetheless implement some changes to suit the Scandinavian context. For example, in the United States, many of these intentional communities are committed to serving the poor through daily works of mercy in soup kitchens or homeless shelters. This is also done because activists believe that the poor are victimized by expanding militarism as resources are diverted to war-making that could otherwise be used for education and social programs. But communal service to the poor was not very viable in Sweden since the socialist welfare state provides sufficient assistance to those in need and thus *Omega* residents focused almost exclusively on nonviolent trainings, organizing actions, and so forth.

Swedish organizers also sponsored regular gatherings to parallel the Atlantic Life Community's "Faith and Resistance" retreats. Direct ties were critical here, as Hengren and other Europeans who participated in U.S. retreats shared their knowledge about how this network of war resisters operates. But again, they enacted changes. Given that many recruits were not Christian, they dropped some of the religious components. Specifically, they changed the name from "Faith and Resistance" to "Hope and Resistance" retreats. They kept certain elements of U.S. retreats, such as studying and discussing texts, but very often the texts were not scriptural. Moreover, they added in workshops on topics ranging from parenting and activism, resistance in prison, to juggling and salsa dancing. Basically, these "Hope and Resistance" retreats blended the U.S. Plowshares movement's Bible study/action tradition with the Scandinavian informal education system that stems from the nineteenth century Folk High Schools and study circles. Despite its altered form, the Swedish retreat network served the same purpose as the Atlantic Life Community: reinforcing commitment to long-term, high-risk war resistance.

Although many aspects of the U.S. movement's organizational infrastructure were adopted, the leadership form was not. The original Plowshares movement coalesced around the charismatic leadership of Philip and Daniel Berrigan, who became national figures for the radical U.S. peace movement during the Vietnam War. When the General Electric action occurred in 1980, the Berrigan brothers were already seasoned resisters with nearly 20 years of activist experience. Moreover, they had required social distinction from serving time in prison. Just as Nelson Mandela's moral authority increased from years of incarceration, the Berrigans also gained honor for their willingness to fight for peace, regardless of the consequences. When the costs of activism are high, those who are willing to pay the price develop a level of prestige, which Bourdieu (1991) calls "symbolic capital." The combination of charisma and symbolic capital, along with the moral authority afforded to clergy, meant that no official decision-making process was needed to determine who would lead this movement. The Berrigans were seen as wise guides and venerated mentors, to whom activists willingly deferred.

The Swedish plowshares activists, however, had no comparable charismatic leader. Nor did they want one since they wished to create a non-hierarchical, radically egalitarian movement. Toward that end, they borrowed from the democracy principles and practices of other social movements, including the appointment of "vibes-watchers," who observe the emotional dynamics of the group, sexism-watchers, oppression-watchers, and so forth (Polletta, 2002). Despite these efforts to promote equality and unity, interpersonal conflicts became a major obstacle for the Swedish movement.

Strategy

Given the secular orientation of the Swedish population, another implementation issue was whether to shift the strategy from the acts of moral witness that characterize the U.S. Plowshares tradition toward the formation of a broad-based movement. Swedish activists debated whether they wanted to put more emphasis on witnessing or winning. In contrast to U.S. activists, who consider these works an important form of prophetic testament regardless of the outcome, a sizeable number of Swedes wanted to be politically effective. Swedish activist Hasse Leander (1997: 12): described these differences:

There is a widespread idea amongst Plowshares activists in the U.S. about not worrying about what is effective or about attaining results. They mean that it is not possible to judge what is effective, but that the results lie in the hands of God. The only thing they can do is to witness about the truth. In Sweden, most people think that Plowshares actions and other civil disobedience are important just because it makes the nonviolence work more effectively.... I think that if activists in Sweden noticed that the actions didn't lead to change, most of them would think about doing it differently.... In Sweden and Europe I have taken part in

many discussions about how the movement can grow. Plowshares activists in the U.S. don't seem to view it like this. As far as I have understood it, there is not much interest in how their actions are received by the rest of the society, if they really work as a challenge. The important thing is to en flesh the Gospels.

After numerous discussions, many Swedish activists decided to move away from the normative and expressive strategy of the U.S. movement toward a more instrumental and communicative approach that would have greater influence on the Swedish weapons trade. However, building a politically effective movement required that they expand their ranks, recruit a more heterogeneous membership base, and build ties to other progressive groups. Toward that end, they organized "disarmament camps" modeled after the British Greenham Common peace camps that combined acts of civil disobedience with a continuous presence at military facilities. To draw in a wide range of participants, Swedish activists distributed flyers inviting "environmental activists, feminists, Plowshares members, syndicalists, anarchists, socialists, liberals, atheists, new agers, and Christians" to participate (Vinthagen files). In the summer of 1992, 200 people attended—some for just a day or two—but only a small minority engaged in civil disobedience. The next summer, Plowshares organizers required that campers stay for a minimum of one week. As a result, the camp drew only 60 participants, half of whom participated in direct disarmament actions. The third peace camp was held in 1995. The numbers dropped to 25, since organizers clearly stated that the purpose was to engage in direct action and thus campers were expected to stay for the entire three weeks.

The peace camps' declining numbers indicated that the costs associated with the Plowshares movement were prohibitive since many potential supporters were not willing to commit civil disobedience or go to prison. Based on this concern, some made a proposal to redesign the movement in two ways: 1) emphasize lower-risk forms of participation; and 2) change the infrastructure from intentional resistance communities to a national, formalized membership organization. The suggested shift away from intentional communities was prompted by the fact that the *Omega* experiment was collapsing because of personal conflicts and disagreements about the community's purpose and policies. Additionally, many felt that the intentional community structure was ineffective in Sweden. One man explained:

The intentional community movement is much bigger in the U.S... There is a difference in context also. Sweden is a country where the ... average person here is a member of five or six organizations, maybe more. You're a member of the union, a sports organization, some nature group, a solidarity thing. Once a year you pay your membership and you get mailings. You're not so active; sometimes you go to a meeting, perhaps, but that kind of activism is very common here.... Most of the day-to-day work is done by people employed by the organization. So there are a lot of formal organizations but not these kinds of grassroots communities of resistance (interview with the first author, 2003).

Intentional communities also had little religious resonance in Sweden, whose Protestant tradition has no comparable form of communal monastic life. This is a sharp contrast to the U.S. movement where, according to the first author's survey, nearly 60 percent of Plowshares activists have lived in a Catholic Worker community for one or more years and roughly one third are, or were at one time, members of a Catholic religious order. Thus the notion of giving up personal possessions and living communally was not as foreign to them as it was to many Swedes, who were less likely to join a movement that required such living arrangements.

By 1995, a sizeable number of activists agreed to the proposed changes and they established a centralized membership organization called *Svärd till Plogbillar* (Swords into Plowshares). It resembled a traditional social movement organization, publishing newsletters and sponsoring annual meetings. One Swedish member recounted, "We created the organization ... to open it up for people to get involved without moving into community or being part of a Plowshares group in which they risked jail. So that was an important aspect since many people wanted to widen the possibilities for people to get involved. Eventually, we had 150-200 members" (interview with the first author, 2003).

But not all Swedish activists agreed with this change in strategy and form. In fact, some did not join the new organization but rather continued planning witness-oriented, high-risk acts of hammering upon weapons. Others maintained that intentional communities were critical and thus they (unsuccessfully) attempted to recreate them. And within the newly created (and more heterogeneous) *Svärd till Plogbillar* organization, conflicts quickly arose over various issues. Activists fiercely debated which types of political influence were acceptable. This topic became particularly contentious from 1997 to 2000 when Plowshares members initiated a dialogue process with the manufacturing company Bofors, which sold weapons to the Indonesian military that was responsible for human rights abuses in East Timor. Some activists considered this co-optation, but others felt that dialogue is an essential feature of nonviolent resistance and a viable way to achieve real results (Engell-Nielsen, 2001). Another tension was over the new organization's decision-making process. While all agreed to a consensus format, many felt that their actual practice was not completely democratic since a few powerful personalities seemed to have the greatest influence. Activists also fought over how much time and energy to spend dealing with internal group dynamics versus executing actions.

Although the new organization was designed to help the Swedish Plowshares movement grow—by offering lower risk forms of participation and creating a larger, more diverse membership—it soon began to unravel. The group's internal conflicts became so heated that some members resigned from the organization while others shifted their involvement to different movements and causes. Eventually, the group splintered over these disagreements and by 2000 they faced the question of whether they wanted to continue. In this fifth step of the diffusion model, the *confirmation stage*, they decided that this movement was no longer workable. They suspended the organization and thus

the Swedish Plowshares movement came to an end. Some activists subsequently attempted to recreate the movement but, to date, no more Plowshares actions have occurred in Sweden.

The British Plowshares Movement

The British Plowshares case also reveals how experimentation occurs when activists import a foreign movement. Yet in contrast to the Swedish Plowshares case—where experimentation led to significant internal conflict that undermined the movement—British organizers' divergent approaches led to the emergence of two different groups known as the “orthodox Plowshares” and the “Trident Plowshares” movements.

The diffusion of Plowshares activism to Great Britain began when Stephen Hancock, an Oxford University student and peace activist, became captivated by the radical commitment of the U.S. Catholic Left. Intrigued by their combination of faith, anarchism, and war resistance, he traveled to Jonah House in Baltimore to learn more. Upon returning to the United Kingdom, Hancock held meetings with groups such as Catholic Peace Action and the Fellowship of Reconciliation to recruit participants for a British Plowshares campaign. Eventually, a Quaker named Mike Hutchinson joined him and in March of 1990 the two men entered the Upper Heyford U.S. Air Base that housed F-111 fighter planes. When they located one of the planes, they used hammers to smash the cockpit and they poured blood upon the nuclear weapons control panel. They were arrested and eventually convicted of criminal damage, resulting in a prison sentence of 15 months (Laffin, 2003). Roughly three years later, Chris Cole launched the second Plowshares action when he broke into the British Aerospace weapon factory. He spilled blood and hammered upon the European Fighter Aircraft and the Hawk Strike Attack Aircraft. He was apprehended and eventually convicted of criminal damage, resulting in an eight-month prison term (Chris Cole, interview with the first author, 2003).

These first two campaigns closely followed the U.S. model in terms of tactics, religious motivation, and an emphasis on moral witness. The third British action, however, revealed that experimentation was underway. This campaign, known as the Seeds of Hope action, occurred in 1996 when three women—Andrea Needham, Joanna Wilson, and Lotta Kronlid (a Swede)—broke into a British Aerospace facility to smash an attack plane that was being sent to the Indonesian military that was responsible for the deaths of 200,000 people in East Timor—roughly one third of the total population (Aditjondro, 2000). When the three women were brought up on criminal charges—along with one of their supporters, Angie Zelter, who was charged with conspiracy—they decided to fight for an acquittal, arguing that their action was warranted by the “necessity defense.” This defense holds that one is allowed to break a law when imminent danger is present, when the normal channels of dealing with a threat are ineffective, and the person

is acting to prevent a greater harm. For example, a person who enters a burning house to rescue those inside is not guilty of trespassing since this action was done to save lives.

While U.S. Plowshares activists use similar legal arguments in court, they are almost always convicted. However, since they emphasize fidelity to the prophetic tradition, they are not deeply concerned with the outcome of their trials; they view prison as merely an extension of their witness. In contrast, the Seeds of Hope women wanted to win. They believed an acquittal would prove that the sale of weaponry to a genocidal regime violates international law. Departing from the U.S. Plowshares custom of defending themselves, the Seeds of Hope activists secured an attorney who had an impressive record with political cases, including some notable victories with Irish Republican Army-related trials. The women also had the foresight to provide video documentation of their previous efforts to stop the shipment of weapons to East Timor. Strategically, they brought this video along when they conducted their action at the British Aerospace factory, leaving it at the scene when they were arrested. When the police confiscated it, the video became part of the evidence that the jury was allowed to see. This video was critical in demonstrating a key element of the necessity defense—namely, that drastic measures were justified since the normal channels for addressing this concern had proven ineffective. The activists also presented evidence that linked the use of British Aerospace weaponry to human rights abuses in East Timor, thereby supporting their claim that they were using reasonable force to prevent a greater crime. On the stand, Joanna Wilson stated that their situation paralleled a recent shooting spree that had occurred at a school in Scotland. She argued that if someone had tried to stop the gunman by taking away his weapon, that individual would have been honored, not prosecuted. Wilson said that she and her co-defendants were trying to stop a similar slaughter of children in East Timor.

After deliberations, the jury found the women “not guilty” on all accounts, marking the first full acquittal in the history of the Plowshares movement. This success led some British activists to contemplate a shift away from the U.S. movement’s emphasis on prophetic moral witness to a more politically efficacious approach. This impulse grew stronger when the International Court of Justice released a document in 1996 known as the “Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons.” In this document, World Court advisors stated that humanitarian law prohibits preparation for genocide and forbids any military practice that causes unnecessary suffering. Since nuclear missiles are weapons of mass destruction, court advisors argued that the use or threatened use of nuclear weapons contradicts international law and thus all nations should move toward disarmament (Boisson de Chazournes and Sands, 1999). They also confirmed the Nuremberg Charter, which emphasizes that citizens must uphold international law even when their governments violate it (Zelter, 2001).

The Trident Plowshares Movement

Convinced that the Advisory Opinion provided a strong basis for challenging British military policies, Angie Zelter began planning a “reformed” Plowshares movement whereby a popular uprising would force the government to comply with international mandates. However, this would require a critical mass and, at the time, there were only a handful of Plowshares activists in Great Britain. Believing that the long prison sentences associated with the movement deterred prospective participants, Zelter redesigned the movement to incorporate lower-cost forms of protest. Then, using a technique from the 1960s known as the “Committee of 100,” she planned to get at least 100 people to commit to a direct action campaign. She hoped that thousands would eventually mobilize against the United Kingdom’s nuclear weapons—especially the Trident nuclear submarines located at the Faslane Royal Naval Base in Scotland.

Zelter discussed her proposal with experienced peace activists and eventually six people joined her in designing the “Trident Plowshares” movement. They drafted a handbook that spelled out the movement structure and participation rules; they also established a timeline to recruit and train activists. By August 1998, several hundred people gathered at the Faslane Royal Navy base; more than 100 were arrested for civil disobedience. Over the next years, the actions expanded so that campaigns at Faslane and other military bases in Great Britain are now routinely held four times a year and thousands have been arrested for protest actions (*Tri-Denting It Handbook*, 2001).

One reason why the British Trident Plowshares movement has been successful in mobilizing many campaigns is that organizers made numerous changes to make this imported style of activism more compatible with the British context. Specifically, leaders tempered the heavily religious language and rituals, setting a much more secular tone. For example, while Hancock, Hutchinson, and Cole used blood in their orthodox acts of disarmament, the Trident Plowshares campaigns do not, since they maintain that the theological significance will not resonate with the largely secular British population. Similarly, Trident organizers emphasize that while their campaign is inspired by the U.S. Catholic Left, it is not explicitly faith-based. This is evident in the Trident Plowshares handbook (2001) that states:

The Plowshares movement originated in the North American faith-based peace movement. Many priests and nuns in the 1970s began to resist the Vietnam War, thereby connecting with the radical political secular movements. When the war ended, the arms race and nuclear weapons became the focus of resistance.... Although the name comes from the Hebrew scripture, the Plowshares movement is not a Christian or Jewish movement. It includes people of different faiths and philosophies. Actually, in most Plowshares groups the members adhere to a range of different faiths or philosophies. Some people have seen their action arising out of the Biblical prophecy of Isaiah and as witnessing to the kingdom of God. Others, coming from a secular perspective, have viewed their action as being

primarily motivated by a humanist or deeply held conscience commitment to nonviolence and solidarity with poor. Then again there have been other people with a range of religious, moral or political convictions. What they all have in common is a striving to abolish war, an engagement in constructive conversion of arms and military related industry into life affirming production, and the development of nonviolent methods for resolving conflicts.

By establishing a more inclusive tone, Trident Plowshares organizers appealed to a wider segment of British citizens.

The other major change was that Trident Plowshares organizers offered recruits a choice between high- and low-risk forms of action. Convinced that few people are willing to serve long prison sentences, leaders altered the traditional tactics of the Plowshares movement. They began by organizing blockades at the naval bases. Next, they decided to attempt hammering on the nuclear submarines. However, since most of them operate openly, informing the police of their actions in advance, few ever reach their target. Even though such actions do not actually obstruct the government's nuclear capacities, Trident Plowshares leaders argue that the sheer numbers of people willing to participate can have an important effect. They state:

Several hundred is a good enough number to be able to exert a considerable political impact.... As this project is open and the "authorities" will know who we are and the dates for our attempt, it will be very hard to get near the Trident submarine. Even if we are arrested before we get near the bases or whilst we are attempting to cut through the fences, we will not have failed because this project is also about disarming the public mind and persuading the Government to respond to popular opinion.... Maybe hundreds of us, committed to disarming Trident ourselves, will persuade the British Government to do the disarmament themselves (Boyes et al., 1997: 3-4).

These low-risk disarmament actions, therefore, provide people a way to feel like they are having a real effect without making costly personal sacrifices. In most cases, activists are quickly released from jail and receive only modest sanctions—typically a fine of 50 British pounds, which is equivalent to a speeding fine in the United Kingdom.

The shift to blockading and trespassing made it easier for the Trident Plowshares organizers to recruit participants since these forms of protest are a familiar, long-standing part of the British peace movement's tactical repertoire. For example, as early as 1961, 5,000 British citizens conducted a sit-in at the Ministry of Defense to express their opposition to their government's nuclear policies. In the 1980s, dozens of blockades and trespassing actions occurred at the Greenham base (*Tri-denting It Handbook*, 2001). Because their actions seldom entail destruction of weaponry and Trident Plowshares activists never pour blood, the most controversial and foreign aspects of the U.S. Plowshares movement are not present.

Another key to the Trident Plowshares movement's success is that activists did not spend a lot of time or energy developing and sustaining an organizational infrastructure, as their Swedish counterparts did. From the beginning, organizers anticipated that thousands would eventually join their campaign and they would need some type of administrative capacity, so they set forth the following operating system. First, all recruits were asked to join or form an affinity group—a small organizing cell of three to fifteen people who serve as a support system. Each affinity group registers with the “core group,” which serves as the coordinating force, handling the administrative and logistical tasks. However, Trident Plowshares organizers did not want a centralized, hierarchical form of leadership so new activists join the core group as others cycle out. In addition, every six months, a meeting is held where each affinity group sends one or two representatives to discuss movement policies and strategies. Since the initial organizers put this ready-made system into place and declared that it was not open to debate, recruits have not challenged it. Consequently, this infrastructure provided a stable foundation for movement expansion without consuming a lot of its members' time and energy.

The “Orthodox” Plowshares Movement

As the Trident Plowshares campaign flourished, some British activists continued their effort to implement a movement that closely reflected the U.S. model. Calling themselves the “orthodox” Plowshares movement, these activists tried to establish a similar infrastructure rooted in faith-based communities of resistance. The problem, however, is that such communities are quite rare in the United Kingdom and those that do exist are often small, young, and fledgling. For example, while doing support work for the Seeds of Hope action, activist Ciaran O'Reilly started a Catholic Worker community in Liverpool but it collapsed after a couple of years due to government infiltration and internal conflict. The London Catholic Worker is also limited in the type of practical support it can give Plowshares activists since it is primarily a reflection group, not a communal living facility (O'Reilly interview with first author, July 23, 2003). Without a stable organizational basis, the movement's capacity to grow was limited.

Nonetheless, a few “orthodox” campaigns have occurred, such as the Jubilee 2000 Plowshares action. Its two participants—Amsterdam resident Susan van der Hijden and English priest Martin Newell—met at a European Catholic Worker retreat. They decided to act together, targeting the Wittering Air Force base in southern England where trucks are loaded with the nuclear weapons that are subsequently transported to the Faslane Royal Naval base. This orthodox action occurred at the same time that the Trident Plowshares campaign was underway. The two factions of the movement supported one another and in fact Newell and van der Hijden had initially hoped to conduct their action with members of the Trident Plowshares movement. However, the differences between the two groups made direct collaboration a challenge. In a 2003 interview with the first author, van der Hijden recalled:

We started with a group [of Trident Plowshares activists] but after a while we split up. There was a cultural issue there because Martin and I are really inspired by the traditional Plowshares, the American movement. The “orthodox Plowshares”—that’s what we call ourselves. The others were inspired by the Trident campaign in England. They don’t do that much disarmament really; they are much more into blockading, campaigning and protesting.... What actually split us up in the end is that one of [the Trident Plowshares members] felt that Martin wasn’t ready to go to prison and he didn’t want to be responsible for Martin suffering in prison. It was really strange. But it might also be that we were quite radical, going too fast for them. Being inspired by the American Plowshares movement, we were thinking 5-10 years in prison easily. They were more from this English tradition and they were thinking that three months is a lot. So there was an imbalance in that. Also, we were much stronger Catholics, although we were excited about working together with other people. I think [the Catholic identity] made us more accepting of sacrifices or the idea of suffering for your beliefs. It was normal for us. It was kind of horrifying to them.

The experience of the Jubilee 2000 Plowshares campaign also revealed another difference between the Trident Plowshares and orthodox groups. Since the “reformist” wing is oriented toward political efficacy, they view prison sentences as nothing more than a consequence that they must accept. They typically post bail in order to be released from jail as quickly as possible. They fight for acquittals or minimal sentences. In contrast, members of the orthodox wing view prison as a central part of their witness, just as U.S. Plowshares activists do. They refuse to post bond, out of solidarity with the poor who cannot afford bail, and as a means of keeping the public engaged. Father Martin Newell explained (2000):

About the whole going to jail thing, I certainly believe that if we had accepted bail—conditions and all—we would have had no impact beyond the converted.... I realize how much it would cut down the witness of what this is about—its power of the Spirit to make people question, and be inspired and converted.... “Peace people” seem to have two views of prison: either it is the only time they experience a life shared with the poorest and most oppressed of our society and so they find it an inspiration, a challenging and positive time outside of usual experience. Or they see it as a campaign tool, something that has to be endured. I think for myself ...we can learn from it and apply the lessons we do learn to our daily life outside afterwards. And not just to peace work, or nonviolent action, or our general philosophy of life, but being able to accept and express and live in solidarity with the poor all the way. If we can join in with their “community of destiny,” we may be less tempted to give up the struggle. Because if you associate too much with those who are comfortable, we can begin to yearn for that.

Although the two factions of the British Plowshares movement are on amicable terms and share the goal of abolishing nuclear weapons, their differences are significant. The orthodox are directly inspired by the U.S. Catholic Left and its spirituality, whereas the Trident Plowshares activists have only a nominal connection to it. The orthodox continue to emphasize the importance of moral witness actions, while the Trident Plowshares participants seek to become a viable political force that can hold the British government accountable to international law. Prison witness is essential to one wing of the movement but not the other. The orthodox see themselves as a prophetic minority whose greatest obligation is to be faithful to God's will; Trident Plowshares activists seek allies to build their base of power so that they can realistically influence Great Britain's military policies. Those who are drawn to the orthodox tradition seek political changes but they also aim for a spiritual transformation of the church and society.

How did these choices—to make significant changes or closely emulate the U.S. Plowshares model—affect the groups' outcomes? After experimentation and numerous adaptations, Trident Plowshares organizers created a movement that barely reflects the original U.S. Plowshares movement. These alterations, however, have enabled them to accomplish some notable gains. First, the movement has mobilized thousands of people to protest Great Britain's nuclear arsenal. To date, the Trident Plowshares movement claims that it has generated 2,240 arrests for civil disobedience and 530 trials (www.tridentploughshares.org). Second, in a number of trials, activists have won full acquittals—something that is virtually never achieved in the U.S. movement—thereby attaining some legal recognition that weapons of mass destruction violate international law. Third, the Trident Plowshares movement has succeeded in sustaining these actions over time, providing a decade of resistance to British nuclear policies. This capacity to maintain opposition was particularly apparent in a 2007 movement campaign, called “Faslane 365,” that provided a near continuous blockade of the Faslane Trident base for an entire year, resulting in another 1,150 arrests. Fourth, there is evidence that the movement has had a tangible influence on public opinion. A 2001 poll indicated that 51 percent of Scottish people (who live closest to the nuclear naval bases) held favorable attitudes toward a scheduled Trident action while only 24 percent opposed it (Laffin, 2003: 72). By 2007, polls placed Scottish opposition to Trident nuclear weapons between 58 and 70 percent of the overall population (Johns, 2007; Johnson, 2007; Scottish Government News Release, 2007). Finally, the movement's activities have helped to keep the issue of nuclear weapons alive in national discourse, which may have contributed to renewed opposition from government leaders and other public figures. In June 2007, the Scottish Parliament rejected the British government's plan to replace the Trident nuclear system by a vote of 71 to 16 (Scottish Government News Release, 2007). Additionally, religious leaders—including the Catholic Bishops and the leaders of the Church of Scotland—released statements calling on the British government to disarm.

The level of activity in the British Trident Plowshares movement stands in stark contrast to the orthodox Plowshares movement, which mobilized just four actions in the

course of a decade. In large part, the lower levels of mobilization are due to the fact that activists used the same tactics, symbols, and biblical justifications as their U.S. counterparts; the strongly religious character of the movement simply did not resonate in a secular British context. Moreover, the high costs of participation deterred others from joining and the lack of a secure infrastructure meant that the movement could not provide activists with practical forms of support. Consequently, the movement has never expanded beyond a handful of activists.

Theoretical Implications

As Swedish and British organizers adopted the U.S. Plowshares movement's style of war resistance, they deliberated thoughtfully about how they should implement it in their own countries. Overall, organizers took two different approaches to this issue. On the one hand, the orthodox British group imported the U.S. movement with virtually no changes. But the heavily religious nature of the Plowshares movement—along with its unfamiliar tactics and the high cost of participation—meant that it never really took root in its new (and far more secular) environment. On the other hand, organizers in the British Trident Plowshares movement and the Swedish movement did implement significant changes, and these alterations were actually quite similar. Specifically, each group made strategic decisions to: 1) establish a more formalized movement infrastructure; 2) broaden the movement by recruiting a more heterogeneous group of participants; 3) include more low-risk forms of resistance, thereby minimizing the level of sacrifice required for participation; and 4) become a more politically influential force. If both movement branches enacted similar changes, why were their outcomes so different? A closer comparison of these two Plowshares groups can shed light on this question.

Organizational Form

Both the Swedish and Trident Plowshares movements experimented with organizational form. Since the U.S. Plowshares movement is rooted in a network of faith-based resistance communities, Swedish organizers initially attempted to emulate this. But it quickly became evident that this was not working, largely because intentional communities are quite foreign to Swedish culture. When their commune failed, a sizeable number of Swedish activists decided to create a new infrastructure that resembled a traditional social movement organization, albeit a radically egalitarian one. Experimenting with the ideas of “ultra-democracy,” they aimed to collectively establish an organization that emphasized dialogue, transparency in decision making, and empowering group processes. Despite this shared commitment to democracy, the task of forming a Swedish Plowshares movement organization turned out to be highly

contentious, for two reasons: First, by recruiting diverse participants, Swedish organizers created a high degree of heterogeneity within the movement. This led to differing views regarding movement policies and priorities. Second, the renewed recruitment effort—that was initiated to expand ranks and become more politically effective—generated numerous clashes between veteran Plowshares organizers (who had initiated the movement and had developed some strong leadership skills) and the young, relatively inexperienced recruits who claimed that the veteran organizers exercised undue influence, thereby undermining the egalitarian nature of the organization. Soon, Swedish activists spent more time arguing than organizing, their conflicts became more personal and destructive, and ultimately the movement collapsed under these strains.

In contrast, Trident Plowshares organizers were able to successfully establish a grassroots organization that effectively guided the movement with relatively little conflict. But the process of establishing a movement infrastructure varied notably in these two cases. Before they recruited participants, Trident Plowshares organizers set up their system and declared that it was not open to debate. In all likelihood, those who had serious problems with it did not join the movement, thereby minimizing any confrontations. Swedish organizers did the reverse: They recruited participants first and then attempted to collaboratively build a movement infrastructure. Given their emphasis on equal input, every decision and aspect of the movement was discussed, creating space for internal differences to surface.

We must also emphasize that the purpose of these movement organizations were distinct. British organizers viewed the Trident Plowshares infrastructure as nothing more than an administrative system designed to coordinate the movement. Swedish activists, however, saw their organization as a way to prefigure a radically democratic, nonviolent society. Thus organizational processes and group dynamics had greater significance—and thus became a greater focal point for conflict—since they were viewed as a direct reflection of the movement's utopian goals and vision (Vinthagen files).

This leads us to reconsider the arguments put forth by Gamson (1975) and Piven and Cloward (1977). Gamson posits that a centralized organization increases a movement's chance of success and survival while Piven and Cloward argue that decentralized movements are more likely to sustain an effective radical edge. But we maintain that the *process* of establishing the infrastructure and its perceived *purpose* may be more important than its particular *form*. Collectively forming an organization with activist cadres is likely to entail endless hours of debate, discussion, and experimentation. In the long run, this may mean that members are more invested in an organization that they personally helped to create, but the risk for internal conflict (and subsequent movement collapse) is greater than those cases where leaders present a completely formed and functional system and pronounce it non-negotiable. Moreover, when infrastructure is handled not only as a *means* but also as a *goal in itself*, principled conflicts are more likely to occur since organizational work has greater significance: It is

no longer seen as merely administrative tasks but rather a reflection of the movement's moral vision.

Increased Movement Heterogeneity and Decreased Level of Sacrifice

Another similarity between the Swedish and British Trident Plowshares movements is that both groups altered the overarching strategy from symbolic act of moral witness to political efficacy. This new instrumentalist approach led to two further changes: broader recruitment efforts, and the introduction of lower-risk tactics that require less sacrifice. In order to directly impact military policies, activists felt that they would need to increase their overall number of participants. As they recruited widely to expand activist ranks, the level of heterogeneity within both movements increased. Compared to the strong religious character of the U.S. Plowshares movement—where two-thirds are Roman Catholic and 96.7 percent of participants believe in God—European Plowshares groups were much more diverse, including atheists, pagans, agnostics, secular humanists, Christians, Gandhians, anarchists, and radical feminists (Nepstad, 2008). But, contrary to the assertions of Zald and Ash (1966), this did not directly influence the Plowshares groups' trajectories. Although the Swedish movement did experience significant internal conflict that was exacerbated by the divergent views of its heterogeneous membership, the British movement did not encounter such tensions. This is partly because Trident Plowshares activists have significantly less contact with others in the movement, since they primarily operate in small affinity groups. Twice a year, each affinity group sends a member to a "representatives meeting" where activists discuss policies and other matters of concern. But this loose affiliation, along with the fact that most decisions were made before recruitment efforts began, means that there are few opportunities for members to disagree with one another over the movement's direction and form. In contrast, Swedish participants had ongoing contact with one another at movement retreats and organizational meetings. Thus, the frequency of contact among activists, combined with the number of key decisions that participants must collectively make, can shape whether heterogeneity will be an obstacle.

Finally, we examine how the decision to alter tactics—from high- to lower-risk actions—affected each Plowshares group. In both cases, alternative forms of participation were emphasized because the traditional tactics of the U.S. Plowshares movement, with its associated prison sentences, made recruitment difficult. But in contrast to Gamson's and Piven and Cloward's findings, this shift from highly disruptive tactics (i.e., sabotaging weaponry) to less disruptive methods of protest (i.e., blockades) did not undermine the British Trident Plowshares movement's ability to sustain action or influence public opinion. Although orthodox Plowshares activists did more damage to the weaponry, inflicting greater costs on the military and defense contractors, they did not have enough actions to generate ongoing media attention. Meanwhile Trident Plowshares campaigns occurred steadily, providing a regular source of frustration to the

British naval bases and keeping the nation engaged in debate about nuclear weapons, since the campaigns received considerably greater media coverage than those of the orthodox British movement.

In Sweden, where high-risk actions were also carried out alongside low-risk forms of civil disobedience, there is no evidence that those who made significant sacrifices for the movement were more likely to remain engaged, as Kanter (1968) and della Porta (1992) posit. In fact, in a 2002 interview with the first author, one Swedish activist noted that those who served a prison term for Plowshares activism were more likely to drop out, arguing that they had done their part for the cause. In short, more disruptive tactics that require greater sacrifice may not automatically lead to greater activist commitment or movement longevity.

We wish to make one final comment on the issue of success and outcomes in the international Plowshares movements. Based on our criteria, the British orthodox Plowshares movement may appear to have failed since it has not had any apparent impact on public opinion or government policy and has only mobilized a handful of actions. Yet we acknowledge that the “orthodox” activists assess the situation differently. Like their U.S. counterparts, many perceive themselves as part of a prophetic minority whose greatest obligation is to be faithful to God’s will. Given this emphasis on fidelity over efficacy, these activists may not see movement growth and persistence as a priority. For them, success is measured not by the attainment of movement goals, but rather in the fulfillment of their moral obligations.

Conclusion

While more research is needed to confirm, refute, or extend our ideas, we believe that our examination of the international Plowshares movement raises issues that are important for the study of cross-national collective action. For instance, our study suggests that alterations in strategy may generate more comprehensive changes within a movement than alterations in tactics or operational policies, since a shift in strategy—from expressive to instrumental, in our case—may necessitate new recruitment approaches or infrastructural forms. Moreover, the question of recruitment appears critical to understanding successful versus problematic diffusion. When movement organizers enlist a heterogeneous group of activists, the likelihood of conflict can increase. In this situation, leaders may find it beneficial to make key decisions beforehand—such as the type of movement organization and decision making process that will be employed—in order to avoid tensions that can restrict their ability to mobilize.

A broader, systematic comparison of successful and failed cross-national movements can shed light on the optimal way for leaders to proceed as they adopt a foreign movement and experiment with its implementation in a new context. There is a

clear need for researchers to examine the multitude of other factors that influence whether adaptations will work or not, and the conditions that increase or decrease the chances for successful implementation.

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