The Costs and Risks of Social Activism: 
A Study of Sanctuary Movement Activism*

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Abstract

This study challenges the frequent characterization of social movements as homogeneous webs of activity. Such a view distorts the activist experience and blinds scholars to the daily realities of activism. We use the concepts of "cost" and "risk" to distinguish activist experiences within a single social movement. Data obtained from 141 participants in the sanctuary movement show: (1) individuals engage in a variety of movement activities; (2) cost and risk are empirically distinguishable, along with their personal correlates; and (3) of the variables drawn from two dominant explanations of movement participation, biographical availability factors best predict high-cost activism (more hours devoted to the movement), while socialization factors best differentiate high-risk (direct contact with Central American refugees) from low-risk activists (no refugee contact).

Two research questions have long dominated the sociological study of social movements: the macroquestion of movement emergence: Why do movements emerge in the first place?, and the microquestion of movement recruitment: Why do some individuals, but not others, join social movements? Our research is concerned with the latter question of social movement recruitment. In some ways, our study is concerned with issues preliminary to the question of recruitment. We ask, What are individuals being recruited to do? While this question may appear to be an obvious one to ask about movement recruitment, social movement scholars have paid minimal attention to it.

We approach the study of social activism in several ways. First, we depart from the usual approach of studying recruitment. Rather than searching for factors that differentiate activists from nonactivists, we investigate variation between activists in the same movement. Next, we call into question a view often implied in the sociological study of social movements, a view that distorts the activist experience by depicting social movements as homogeneous webs of activity.

* We want to thank David Snow, John F. Cochran, and two anonymous reviewers for their comments on earlier drafts of this manuscript. This research was partially funded by a grant from the Social and Behavioral Sciences Research Institute, The University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona. Direct all communications to Dr. Gregory L. Wiltfang, Department of Sociology and Social Work, Box 25, Wichita State University, Wichita, KS 67208.
activity, rather than collections of diverse activities. Finally, having recognized
the diversity of movement life, we offer an approach to studying activism using
the concepts of cost and risk to capture some of the diversity of social move-
ment activism.

STUDYING ACTIVISM IN A SINGLE MOVEMENT

Underlying the recruitment question is the presumption that some set of factors
can be found to differentiate activists from nonactivists and to explain move-
ment participation. The diversity and sheer number of factors proposed as
explanations of activism attest to the considerable interest and controversy the
recruitment question has generated among movement scholars. For all of their
differences, these varied approaches to the study of recruitment all assume that
activists can be distinguished from nonactivists on the basis of some factor or
set of factors. The large number of positive relationships produced by these
studies suggests that activists are distinguishable from nonactivists.

But do activists constitute a homogeneous population in their own right? Recent empirical work on the recruitment question often suggests that they do.
Having been so concerned with differentiating activist from nonactivist, recent
research has implicitly depicted movement participants as cut from whole cloth.
In our view this characterization is unwarranted. As social phenomena, social
movements are sufficiently large and diverse to constitute a broad umbrella
covering a wide variety of participants. Therefore, it should be equally
interesting to study variation between participants in a single movement as to
study the differences between activists and nonactivists.

The few empirical studies investigating variation between participants in a
single movement show just how fruitful this approach can be. In his classic
analysis of the French Revolution, Rude (1959) differentiates movement
members by class and ideological allegiance (and to a lesser extent, region) to
make sense of the emergence and subsequent development of the conflict. E.P.
Thompson ([1963] 1968) does likewise in his seminal study of the rise of the
English working class.

The few recent studies to focus on differences between activists in the same
movement have also demonstrated the value of this approach. Fendrich (1977),
for example, shows that the biographical consequences of participation in the
civil rights movement were very different for black and white activists. Drawing
on the work of Evans (1980) and Rothschild (1982), McAdam (1992) finds that
gender mediated every aspect of the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer Project
from recruitment, to daily operations, to the ongoing biographical impact of
participation. Rochford (1985) also found that the dynamics of recruitment into
the Hare Krishna movement differed significantly for men and women.

In this article we focus on yet another, insufficiently explored source of
variation among activists. Our interest lies in investigating differences in the
levels of cost and risk assumed by activists within a single movement.
DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN HIGH-COST, HIGH-RISK AND LOW-COST, LOW-RISK ACTIVISM

Most images of social movements suggest a homogeneity of participation that is contradicted by the everyday reality of movement life. We speak of activists or movement members as if there was a well-defined role or set of activities to which all who are affiliated with a movement conform. This, of course, is nonsense.

Movement participation is rarely so homogeneous. Rather, people engage in a wide variety of activities on the movement’s behalf. These activities can range from the mundane to the extraordinary, from the protracted to the ephemeral. People donate money, write letters to public officials, answer telephones, collect signatures, occupy buildings, attend demonstrations, and assassinate political enemies. In this sense, the term social movement serves as a convenient fiction for a generally varied and diverse collection of activities.

How are we, as scholars, to cope with this diversity? By investing the activist/nonactivist distinction with such significance, we have often ignored the differences in activity among movement participants. Perhaps a more fruitful approach would be to admit such diversity and make it the object of serious study. McAdam (1986) has taken one step in this direction by proposing a distinction between what he calls “high and low-risk/cost activism.”

At the heart of this distinction is the simple observation that some instances of activism are more costly and risky than others. Cost is defined as “the expenditure of time, money and energy required of a person engaged in any particular form of activism.” Risk, on the other hand, refers to “the anticipated dangers — whether legal, social, physical, financial, etc. — of engaging in a particular type of movement activity” (McAdam 1986:67). Cost is anything given up, forgone, spent, lost or “negatively” experienced (e.g., pain, fatigue, etc.) by activists during their participation in movement activities. Risk, on the other hand, refers to the activists’ subjective anticipation or expectation of a cost that they may incur as a result of their movement participation (e.g., being arrested, paying a fine, being beaten, tortured, or killed). Costs are under the individual activist’s control; risks, as future costs, depend not only on the activist’s own actions, but on others’ responses to the activist’s actions.

McAdam (1986) provides examples of how the cost/risk distinction might be applied. He writes: “Signing a petition is a very low cost activity. Volunteering to organize among the homeless entails a very high cost in terms of time and energy. While the act of signing a petition is always low cost, the risk of doing so may, in certain contexts — during the height of McCarthyism, for example — be quite high. Similarly, organizing among the homeless may be costly but relatively risk free” (67).

In the example above, signing a petition may be “low cost” in terms of the time it takes to stop and sign your name; but if signing entails the certainty of being harassed, being fired from your job, or jailed, then the actual “cost” is very high and may act to deter a person from signing.3

McAdam’s conceptualization of risk highlights the subjective dimension, what the activist anticipates or expects their activism to “cost” them. Risk, however, can also be thought of as having an objective dimension. As Stinchombe (1975) reminds us, “people define situations, but do not define them as
they please” (15). For example, representatives of the state and the laws and sanctions of a society have a coercive power to define situations independently of the actor. Therefore, the work of an activist may carry risks unknown to, unacknowledged by, or even denied by the activist. We agree with symbolic interactionists that subjective definitions of situations are good guides for judging the direction of an individual’s future actions. However, an individual’s perceptions and definitions are subject to mistakes, biases, and distortions. Consequently, an activist’s expectation or anticipation of risk may not accurately reflect the actual risks involved in certain movement activities. We are suggesting that movement analysts should also consider the objective risks (e.g., legal penalties, such as fines, jail, or prison sentences) that a particular type of activism entails. Because we live in societies where certain others may have considerable power to define situations and effectively enforce and defend these definitions (e.g., with state violence, arrests and trials, vigilante groups, threats and physical intimidation), when studying activism, it is important to consider the objective risks inherent in social movement activities. A better understanding of movement activism requires careful consideration of both the activist’s subjective definition of the risk(s) associated with a particular type of movement activity and the objective risk(s) associated with the movement activity itself. To use the words of Robert Merton and Robert Nisbet (1975), this distinction “provides a substantial place for the idea that people can make their own history while avoiding the Utopianism that beguiles. But this perspective [on risk] also recognizes that the degrees of freedom people have in making history are limited, sometimes severely limited, by the objective constraints set by nature, society, and culture” (14).

The significance of the cost/risk distinction lies in the conceptual tool it provides us in differentiating the activist experiences of movement participants. McAdam (1986) has already hypothesized divergent recruitment processes for persons engaged in high- and low-cost and high- and low-risk activism. We would like to extend work on this topic both conceptually and empirically. Specifically, using data gathered on participants in the sanctuary movement, we aim (1) to determine whether the distinction between cost and risk is empirically as well as analytically valid; (2) to differentiate in a descriptive sense high-cost, high-risk from low-cost, low-risk activists; and (3) to explain, in a predictive sense, these forms of activism.

The Study

We begin with some brief comments on McAdam’s (1986) use of the cost and risk concepts. McAdam applies these concepts to “a single, highly visible instance of high-risk/cost activism, the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer Project” (71). The history of the Freedom Summer Project furnishes ample evidence to support this characterization. Objectively, Freedom Summer, on both cost and risk dimensions, was an unusually demanding instance of activism. On the average, project participants spent nearly six weeks in Mississippi at their own expense. Thus, participation was costly in terms of both time and money. It also proved to be extremely risky. During the course of the
summer, four project workers were killed, and many others endured bombings, beatings, harassment, and arrest.

McAdam's data, however, do not reflect the activists' project experiences. His data are drawn from detailed applications of individuals applying to participate in the project. This raises some doubt about McAdam's characterization of the project as "a single, highly visible instance of high-risk/cost activism." For all of its importance, McAdam's study lacks data on a crucial variable: the applicants' own perceptions or definitions of the risk associated with their participation.

A fundamental sociological proposition is that situations defined as real are real in their consequences (Thomas & Thomas 1928). Without a measure of the participants' subjective definitions of risk, can we be sure that the act of applying to participate in the Freedom Summer Project was seen by the participants as an act of high-risk activism? To adequately test the usefulness of the risk concept, an indicator of the participants' own definitions of the risk(s) associated with their activism must be included in the analysis.

McAdam also calls attention to the importance of specifying the type and the extent of movement activities with their attendant cost and risk. Because his study is based on data drawn from applications filled out prior to the project, we know neither the activities in which the Freedom Summer volunteers subsequently participated nor the perceived costs and risks associated with their involvement. Specifying the particular movement activities, along with the associated costs and risks, is an important research task we consider.

Thus, besides our desire to untangle empirically cost and risk and to predict variation in each, another aim of this study is to ground the study of these concepts in the activists' own perceptions of their actions. Several months were spent gathering detailed data on 141 persons with varying levels of involvement in the sanctuary movement in Tucson, Arizona. To fully understand the logic of our procedures and the nature of our sample, it will be helpful to provide a brief description of the movement we studied.

THE SANCTUARY MOVEMENT: A RELIGIOUS RESPONSE TO A REFUGEE CRISIS

We can only test the usefulness of applying the concepts of risk and cost to social movement activism in a sample of movement participants whose activism varies in terms of cost and risk. Sanctuary activism is particularly well suited for such a test because many movement activities involve large investments of time, and activists risk arrest, fines, and imprisonment for their work with Central American refugees.

Sanctuary activists challenge the U.S. government's Immigration and Naturalization Service's (INS) policy of deporting thousands of undocumented Salvadorans and Guatemalans. Activists take strong exception to the government's view that the growing number of Central Americans coming to the U.S. since the early 1980s are economic migrants, not political refugees. Sanctuary activists argue that because many Salvadorans and Guatemalans are fleeing the conflict and ravages of civil war in their homelands, they are political refugees who meet both international and U.S. domestic criteria for refugee status. Activists see the government's deportations of Central Americans as contrary to
both international and domestic law and as constituting severe human rights violations. These INS actions have angered a number of citizens and members of religious communities. As a result, concerned individuals have organized an activist group to oppose and to correct the government’s view of conditions in Central America and its continuing deportation and mistreatment of Salvadorans and Guatemalans.

Sanctuary workers have been indicted in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. The perceived seriousness of sanctuary activism was dramatized by the highly publicized 1985-86 trial of the "Tucson 11" on 71 federal charges, all of which carry fines and prison sentences.

The U.S. government's long and extensive 1984 investigation of the movement in Arizona, "Operation Sojourner," its infiltration of the movement using undercover operatives, the seriousness of the charges brought against the defendants, both North and Central American, the naming of a number of unindicted co-conspirators, and the time and expense of over five months of trial graphically illustrates the potential costs and risks associated with providing direct help to Central American refugees and with opposing the U.S. government. The outcome of the trial only served to reinforce the salience of the risks attendant to sanctuary activism. Of the eleven defendants, eight were convicted on at least one charge, and three were found not guilty. Most importantly, these stark numbers index the risks of sanctuary participation, risks we hope to see represented in our sample of sanctuary activists.

THE SAMPLE

We limited ourselves to sanctuary activism in Tucson for several reasons. First, the fact that both authors lived in Tucson made such a choice a logical one. Second, the first author's active participation in local sanctuary activities granted us entree to local activists that we would not have experienced elsewhere. Third, while other areas of the country are active in sanctuary activities, Tucson is seen by many people as the birthplace of the movement. However, the single most important consideration in our decision is Tucson's close proximity, roughly 90 miles, to the U.S.-Mexico border. Tucson is located in a "corridor" through which people from Mexico and Central America enter the United States in large numbers, both legally and illegally. Thus, Tucson's location significantly shapes the form of its sanctuary activities. Considerable amounts of volunteer time are spent in helping refugees to cross safely the international border avoiding contact with U.S. border officials. Also, many Central Americans find their own way to sanctuary churches in Tucson to seek help. As a result, the ranks of Tucson sanctuary activists include many who are involved in what legally are the riskiest of movement activities. This made it more likely that there would be sufficient variation on our dependent variables - objective and subjective risk and cost - in our sample of sanctuary activists. Our sample and data-gathering procedures were designed to ensure such variation.

We took advantage of the first author's status as an "insider" to distribute questionnaires to the movement's most active rank-and-file membership. Questionnaires were distributed at several meetings of movement activists. In
TABLE 1: Percentage of All Persons Reporting Involvement in Various Sanctuary Movement Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What sanctuary activities are you or have you participated in?</th>
<th>Yes %</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tucson refugee support-group meetings&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transporting refugees out of town&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transporting refugees from the border&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing legal aid for refugees</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing educational services for refugees&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding jobs for refugees&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical work</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide housing for refugees&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tucson ecumenical task force meetings</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday prayer vigils</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transporting refugees around town&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended sanctuary symposium</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special events fund-raising events</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donated clothing, money, or food</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> This group is responsible for "border work," that is, helping refugees cross the international border between Mexico and the United States. The work of this group is certainly the riskiest work of the movement.

<sup>b</sup> Indicates activities that involve direct contact with Central Americans.

In addition, questionnaires were given to several activists who agreed to distribute them to participants engaged in perhaps the most dangerous form of sanctuary activism: the pickup and transporting of the refugees. These data-gathering efforts resulted in a total of 51 completed questionnaires.

To ensure that persons whose involvement was more marginal — and therefore less costly and less risky — were also included in the sample, questionnaires were mailed to 180 financial contributors. Ninety of the 180 questionnaires were returned. Our final sample of 141 persons was drawn purposively, then, rather than randomly.

Results<sup>6</sup>

We have argued that most social movements provide their members with a wide range of activities in which to participate. Sanctuary is no exception. Table 1 shows the percentage of our sample that reports participation in fifteen distinct movement activities.
COST AND RISK

To what extent do the differences in activities reported in Table 1 reflect variation in our cost and risk variables? Several questionnaire items were designed to provide measures of both objective and subjective risk as well as the cost of sanctuary activism.

Cost

Cost refers to “expenditures of time, money and energy that are required of a person engaged in any particular form of activism” (McAdam 1986:67). We use the amount of time devoted to sanctuary activities as our measure of cost. Our choice of time as our cost measure rests on its face validity and its ease of measurement. We operationalized cost as the subject’s response to a single question: “How many hours per week, on the average, are you involved in sanctuary activities?” Over half of our sample of sanctuary participants (61.7%) report giving an average of one hour or less per week to the movement activities. The average time reported by the group is slightly more than 4.5 hours. The sample varies, then, not only in the types of activities in which our subjects are involved but in the amount of time they devote to these activities.

Risk

Risk is defined as “the anticipated dangers — whether legal, social, physical, financial, and so forth — of engaging in a particular type of activity” (McAdam 1986:67). To improve upon McAdam’s (1986) use of the concept, we created both a subjective and an objective indicator of risk.

Sanctuary activists having direct contact with Central American refugees face the greatest risks associated with sanctuary work. For each refugee helped, a sanctuary worker runs the risk of a prison sentence of from six months to five years or a fine ranging from $500 to $10,000. Sanctuary workers caught transporting an undocumented Central American run the risk of having their vehicles confiscated and auctioned off by the government — even if the workers are not formally charged.

The objective dimension of risk is operationally defined using the activity categories shown in Table 1. Objective risk is operationalized as participation in any of the six activities shown in Table 1 involving direct contact with refugees. More than a third of the sample (38.3%) report having had one or more contacts with refugees and represents our group of high-risk activists.

Subjective or perceived risk was measured by the responses to the question: “Do you feel you have risked arrest for any of your sanctuary activities?” “No” responses represent “low” perceived risk (74.6%). “Yes” responses indicate “high” perceived risk (25.4%).

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COST AND RISK

Having measured cost and both subjective and objective risk, we next assess the relationship between these variables. Cost and risk may be conceptually distinct, but are they empirically separable? And what of objective and subjective risk? Is an activist’s perception of risk merely a reflection of objective danger or is it
To address the second question, the answer is straightforward. While not identical, our measures of objective and subjective risk are highly correlated ($r=.72$). While the correlation is high enough to justify using only one measure as a proxy for risk, the conceptualization of risk we offered above suggests that the correlates of the two risk measures may differ. We use both measures of risk in the analysis that follows.

This approach still leaves the relationship between our cost and risk measures unexamined. As expected, the correlation between risk and cost ($r=.30$) is much weaker than the risk correlation. Risk and cost are certainly related, but remain separate dimensions along which instances of activism can be ordered.

THE CORRELATES OF COST AND RISK

The second goal of our study is to distinguish low-cost, low-risk from high-cost, high-risk activists using a variety of independent variables drawn from two leading explanations of social movement participation, microstructural and sociocultural explanations (see McAdam, McCarthy & Zald 1988 for a discussion of these explanations).

Later in the analysis, we combine these variables and study their joint effect on cost and risk. First, however, we look at the simple bivariate relationships between cost and risk and several independent variables reflecting these very different explanations of individual activism. The first explanation of social activism centers on the concept of “biographical availability” (McAdam 1986).

BIOGRAPHICAL AVAILABILITY AND SANCTUARY ACTIVISM

The concept of biographical availability is defined as “the absence of personal constraints that might increase the costs and risks of movement participation, such as full-time employment, marriage, and family responsibilities” (McAdam 1986:70). Several authors suggest a link between activism and the absence of these or other biographical constraints. For example, McCarthy and Zald’s (1973) observations of the unusually high numbers of students and autonomous professionals active in movements reflect a clear understanding of the way biography constrains activism. Snow and Rochford (1983:3) found that “a substantial majority of Hare Krishna recruits had few countervailing ties which might have served to constrain their participation in the movement” (see also Rochford 1985:76-84). Finally, McAdam’s (1986) study of recruitment to the Freedom Summer Project highlights the degree to which participants were “uniquely free of the type of [biographical] constraints that might have inhibited participation” (70). McAdam’s study is particularly germane to our own in that he shows an especially strong relationship between high-cost and high-risk activism and the type of biographical constraints touched on here — constraints that McAdam argues only become barriers to participation when the costs or risks of activism have reached fairly high levels, such as those under study here.

Our study provides an opportunity to test the relationship between biographical availability and high-cost and high-risk activism hypothesized by
TABLE 2: Correlations Between Cost, Risk and Biographical Availability Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biographical Availability</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>Objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.28***</td>
<td>-.18*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>-.26**</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children currently living at home</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.23**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment status</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>.15*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Variables values: age (in years), marital status, children, children currently living at home, employment status (0 = no; 1 = yes)

*p < .05  ** p < .01  *** p < .001

McAdam. Specifically, we investigate the relationship between the cost and risk measures and the following four variables related to the concept of biographical availability: age, marital status, parental responsibilities, and employment status. The simple correlations between the indicators of biographical availability and the cost and risk variables are presented in Table 2.

Age
Perhaps no variable is as closely linked to the concept of biographical availability as age. Age is related to a host of personal constraints. The “young” are more likely than older age groups to be in school, unmarried, and generally free from obligations imposed by family and career; they simply have more time to commit to activism than persons with full-time work or family responsibilities. For these reasons, we expect younger persons to be generally more active in social movement activities than older persons. The pressure of such responsibilities might also discourage a person from getting involved in particularly risky forms of activism. Consequently, we expect that younger persons lacking such responsibilities will be disproportionately represented in the ranks of high-risk activists.

The data are consistent with these hypotheses. Table 2 shows a significant negative relationship between age and cost among the activists. Younger activists devote the most time to the movement. A similar relationship is found between age and subjective risk. Younger activists are more likely to engage in what they define as riskier forms of activism.

These findings suggest the power of age-related biographical constraints in shaping distinctive patterns of activism among participants. Curiously, however, when we start examining the specific constraints themselves, the picture gets much more complicated. The expected relationships either do not materialize or are more contingent than we had anticipated. The relationships between cost, risk, and marital status offer good examples of both patterns.
Marital Status

Marriage is another biographical constraint believed to restrict opportunities for activism. Marriage implies a set of commitments that may supersede loyalties to the movement, especially if only one spouse is involved with activism. In addition, marriage often coincides with other major life events — geographical moves, job changes, the birth of a child — that may reduce the time available for activism. Finally, the array of new responsibilities and dependencies that generally accompany marriage may not only reduce the time available for activism but the willingness of a married person to engage in especially risky forms of activism. We would expect, then, to see a significant negative effect of marriage on both our cost and risk measures. However, we do not find direct support for this proposition. Current marital status is unrelated to either felt risk or cost which suggests, at least in this sample, that marital status does not constrain activism.

To further explore the relationship between cost, risk, and marital status, we analyzed the relationship between (1) a question asking whether the participants had ever been married and (2) cost. We assumed that younger persons are less likely to be married and that age might be influencing the relationship between marital status and our dependent variables. As we suspected, those who have never been married were more likely to give more time (48.6%) than those who have been married (29.1%). The relationship \( r = -0.18 \) is in the direction predicted by a biographical availability account of activism.

Parental Status

The research on the influence of children on social activism has produced conflicting results. Having children is a positive predictor of participation in at least one study (Wright & Hyman 1958). In another study, the presence of children was found to negatively predict activism (Oliver 1984). Can these conflicting findings be reconciled? We think so.

Simply looking at whether participants have children probably is not sufficient. Common sense suggests that having young children living at home is more likely to have a negative effect on activism than having older children living at home or not having any children at all. Previous research investigated the effects of the presence of children under 18 years of age on activism. Older children — say those between 12 and 18 — do not require the same form or amount of attention that younger children often demand. Our reasoning leads us to expect a negative relationship between having children at home and both risk and cost.

Over half of the sample (60%) have children. Of this group, however, only a third of them (30.4%) report having children currently living at home. As we see in Table 2, participants with children are less likely to give time to movement activities. This illustrates quite nicely the idea behind biographical availability: family responsibilities are likely to hinder activism. How about the question of children living at home? As predicted, we find a small, negative relationship between having children at home and cost. Again, this illustrates the power of biographical constraints on activism.
Turning next to our risk measures, our study becomes slightly more complicated. Rather than the negative relationship predicted by a biographical availability account of activism, we find a positive relationship between both measures of risk and having children living at home. What are we to make of this relationship?

In an analysis not shown here, we found that it is those with older children (over 12 years old) at home — rather than the childless — who report they feel they have risked arrest. This finding is consistent with a biographical availability account of activism. We also found that those with younger kids at home are as likely to report feelings of risk as the childless. Although it may seem difficult on first glance to reconcile these findings with the idea of parenthood as a biographical constraint on activism, we think we can.

We interpret these seemingly anomalous findings by drawing on qualitative findings based on field observations, using them to inform our analysis. While information concerning child care was not specifically asked on the questionnaire, observations of sanctuary activities document that, when the need arose, activists with children often made child-care arrangements with others in the sanctuary community. While children were generally always present during special events, such as concerts, fund-raising events, or parties, rarely were children present during sanctuary work, especially the more risky activities.

Infrequently, children were used for impression-management purposes. Young children taken along to the border lend some legitimacy to a “run” — the term given to the process of smuggling Central Americans across the border — by giving the impression to onlookers that the group of people gathered near the border are on a family outing. Also, when entire Central American families were smuggled across the border, the children were sometimes put in a car to blend in with North American or Mexican children and driven through border checkpoints. These results and observations suggest that the relationship between children and activism is probably more complex than previously thought.

**Employment Status**

McCarthy and Zald (1973) propose a link between activism and employment status by hypothesizing that those free of employment pressures — such as students and housewives — are likely to be more available for activism than full-time, paid employees. Also, persons whose jobs afford them a measure of discretion over their work schedules — college professors and lawyers, for instance — are more likely to engage in activism than those whose work schedules are rigidly proscribed by others. Though all of these observations concern the costs of activism, the perspective proposed by McCarthy and Zald can be applied to the issue of risk also. It seems reasonable to assume that paid employees would be less likely to engage in high-risk activism than those outside of the paid work force. Their freedom from the threat of job loss might, for example, help account for the high levels of activism among students. Then, too, autonomous professionals and the self-employed would also be less vulnerable to work-related sanctions and therefore more likely to engage in high-risk activism.
TABLE 3: Percentage of High-Cost and Low-Cost Sanctuary Activists by Occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>High Cost</th>
<th></th>
<th>Low Cost</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activist</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctuary</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political/community organizations</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social service</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapist</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working student</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nonprofessional</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-collar</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not working</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not working</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>65.9</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing cases = 9

Small, positive relationships are found between current employment status and both cost and risk measures. The direction of the relationships appears to run counter to a biographical availability account of activism. Participants who were employed full-time, rather than those not employed, were more likely to report feelings of risk. Similar findings were found by McAdam (1986:83). How are we to make sense of these findings?

Another possibility, suggested by McCarthy and Zald (1973), is that it is not employment per se, but discretionary time, that determines a person's availability for activism. To test this idea, we asked our subjects to describe the type of work they did. Their responses, cross-classified by cost, are presented in Table 3. While our numbers are small, if we view them qualitatively, a picture
emerges consistent with a biographical availability account of movement participation.

Because of the religious nature of the sanctuary movement, it is not surprising to see the “clergy” among those giving the most time to sanctuary activities. For them, sanctuary is seen as part of their ministerial duties. The percentage of the “professor” category, when compared to the other category percentages, is consistent with McCarthy and Zald’s account of activism: professors are among those most likely to give time to the movement. Some other “professionals,” however, are noticeable by their absence across the categories of the dependent variables. The distinction in the participation of various professionals suggests an interesting possibility: some professionals may not be as free in terms of discretionary time than other professionals. The structure of the professional world appears to allow some to regularly participate in activism, while constraining others. Unfortunately, we lack the type of data necessary to explore this question further.

Two other occupational categories, social service and clerical, are worthy of note. The high levels of cost in the latter category are especially puzzling. While it is impossible to tell from the questionnaires, we suspect that these clerical workers are employed by a church or some other religious group. The involvement of social service workers is likely the result of the assistive nature of their work. An important part of sanctuary work is helping Central American refugees make use of the available health, education, and welfare services. These are services that sympathetic individuals with special skills or knowledge may be willing to provide.

These findings, then, suggest two conclusions about the link between employment and activism. First, the data provide considerable support for the importance of biographical availability in encouraging activism — irrespective of the level of cost. Excluding missing cases, 43% of our sample (57 of 132) were not employed. Another 41% were professionals who enjoyed the kind of work autonomy and discretionary time that encourages activism. By contrast only 9% were employed in nonprofessional occupational sectors.

But what of the relationship between occupation and high-cost activism? These data support an interesting conclusion: high-cost activists are drawn disproportionately from the ranks of those whose jobs overlap and, therefore, in some way support their activism. If we exclude the 15 high-cost activists who are not working, this characterization holds for more than half (16 of 30) of those who devote more than two hours a week to the movement. This group includes the paid sanctuary workers, a majority of clergy and clerical workers, as well as a sizeable minority of social service professionals.

Combining these two findings yields an intriguing possibility. Freedom from employment pressures or discretion in the way one structures work time may be a critical impetus to activism. Ironically, however, high-cost activism may depend on the individual’s ability to integrate activism into paid work routines.

Socialization Accounts of Sanctuary Activism

A straightforward socialization account provides the second major explanation of these more costly and risky forms of activism. Socialization occurs in a
TABLE 4: Correlations Between Cost, Risk, and Other Activism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Activism</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>Objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picketing in a strike*</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil rights demonstration</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.13+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antiwar demonstration</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>.27**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School demonstration</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor organizing b</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local electoral campaigns</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State electoral campaigns</td>
<td>-.13+</td>
<td>.19**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National electoral campaigns</td>
<td>-.16*</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For the first four activism items, participants were asked if they had ever taken part in the listed activities. The response categories provided were (0) “no” and (1) “yes.”

b For the remaining items, participants were asked: “Please check the appropriate space to indicate your level of involvement in the following past and present movements or political activities.” Four response categories were provided: “not involved,” “somewhat involved,” “moderately involved,” and “very involved.”

+ p < .10  * p < .05  ** p < .01

number of social contexts (Gecas 1981) among the most important being family, church, school, and peer group. But as Snow and Machalek (1982), Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson (1980), and McAdam (1986) remind us, socialization also takes place in the context of social movements.

Erstwhile activists do not “join” social movements in the same way they might a formal organization. Most individuals generally do not become involved as full-fledged activists. Instead, prospective recruits are gradually socialized into the behavioral requirements and ideological proscriptions expected of the activists. Specifically, McAdam (1986:69) has proposed a model of recruitment to high-cost and high-risk activism, emphasizing a cycle of activism and deepening ideological socialization as the key to understanding the forms of intense activism under study here.

This perspective has important implications for the study of high-cost, high-risk activism. It suggests that both are the result of a long process of socialization in which less risky and less costly forms of activism gradually pave the way for the more intense forms of activism. We expect that high-cost, high-risk activism will be highly correlated with other indicators of integration into movement culture, such as a history of prior activism and strong support for the ideology of the movement.

Prior Activism

Like all roles, the role of an activist is actualized over time in numerous role “performances.” Initially, these performances are likely to be fairly safe, self-conscious forays into the world of activism. But in time, the “successful” activist...
### TABLE 5: Correlations Between Cost, Risk, and Participation in Other Social Movements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Social Movement Involvement*</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Risk Subjective</th>
<th>Risk Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam antiwar movement</td>
<td>-.12+</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student movement</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's movement</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm workers</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.14*</td>
<td>.19**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay rights</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.11+</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prochoice</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to life</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common cause</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.11**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental movement</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft resistance</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>.13+</td>
<td>.13+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antinuclear movement</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear freeze movement</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.11+</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary peace movement</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>.21**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-apartheid</td>
<td>-.13+</td>
<td>.12+</td>
<td>.14*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World hunger</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.16*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* See Table 4 for wording to question about other social movement involvement.

+ p < .10  * p < .05  ** p < .01

comes to internalize the role and to act more decisively in concert with it. By the time an individual comes to engage in the costly or risky forms of activism under study here, the expectation is that s/he will already have amassed an extensive history of prior activism.

Table 4 indicates that this is indeed the case for our sample of sanctuary participants. Far and away the strongest relationships are between the activism measures and objective risk. Six of the nine risk relationships are significant compared to just three of the cost correlations. We created an index by summing the responses across the nine activism indicators. The activism index is unrelated to cost. It was related, however, to both subjective risk \( (r=.20) \) and objective risk \( (r=.29) \).

Much the same pattern of relationships is evident when we look at involvement in the fifteen specific movements shown in Table 5. Many of the correlations are positive, indicating a link between involvement in sanctuary and other past and present social movements. Similar to the findings presented in Table 4, Table 5 shows that participation in these other movements is more strongly related to our risk measures than to cost. Only three of the fifteen cost correlations are significant. In contrast, eight of the objective risk relationships are significant.
It is not clear why the other movement items are more highly correlated with objective than subjective risk. One interesting possibility is that the longer one engages in what objectively is high-risk activism, the more inured of the risks s/he becomes. Or it may be that through the process of ideological socialization the high-risk activist learns to deny the risks s/he is objectively facing. Specifically, sanctuary activists have remarked that the risks they may encounter are nothing compared to the risks faced by the refugees. This kind of socialized denial of felt risk may lead to the disparity between subjective and objective risk seen in Table 5. Whatever accounts for the disparity, the bottom line remains clear: the data presented here provide clear evidence of a strong link between high-risk activism and prior movement involvement.

Religious Involvement and Ideology

The items on prior activism were designed to measure a participant's socialization into the activist role. But the activist role varies from movement to movement depending upon the structural and ideological base upon which the movement rests. In the case of sanctuary, it is a variety of religious groups that serve as this base. This is true both structurally and ideologically.

Structurally, the origins of the movement are firmly rooted in religious groups. Much of the movement leadership has come from the clergy. In addition, churches, synagogues, and meetings have served as the primary recruitment contexts for the movement. Ideologically, the social gospel and liberation theology have served as the principal ideological "frames" (Snow, Zurcher & Ekland-Olson 1980) legitimizing sanctuary activism. Though the U.S. government sees the movement as a political challenge to its immigration and foreign policies, many sanctuary workers view their work as religiously inspired and grounded.

Given the centrality of religious groups and the salience of religious ideology to the movement, any socialization account of high-cost, high-risk sanctuary activism must assess the relationship between that activism and various measures of religious adherence. We look at two such measures here. The first measures the frequency of involvement in religious services among sanctuary activists. Participants were asked how often they attended religious services. Their answers were coded into five response categories: (1) never, (2) infrequently, (3) somewhat, (4) frequently, and (5) very frequently. A breakdown of the responses highlights the importance of religious group activity to the movement. Nearly half of the respondents (47%) indicated they attended religious services "very frequently." Only 15% report that they never attended. More relevant to us, however, is the relationship between religious attendance and our cost and risk measures. High-cost activism is unrelated to church attendance. On the other hand, there is a positive relationship between religious attendance and our risk measure ($r=.17$).

A somewhat similar set of relationships holds between the cost and risk variables and our second measure of religious adherence that focuses on the salience of religious beliefs in the participants' lives. Activists were asked to express simple agreement or disagreement with the following statement: "Religious beliefs are an important influence in my life." Nearly 80% of all subjects agreed with the statement. Again, this demonstrates the religious nature
TABLE 6: Determinants of High-Cost and High-Risk Activism Among Sanctuary Movement Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Subjective</th>
<th>Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>β</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biographical Availability:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>-2.87</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>-.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children at home</td>
<td>-4.48</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>-.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment status</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socialization</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious attendance</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other activism</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R²</strong></td>
<td>.15</td>
<td></td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>3.149**</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.62**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>131</td>
<td></td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ p < .10  * p < .05  ** p < .01  *** p < .001

of sanctuary. The religious beliefs variable is unrelated to cost, but it does show the predicted, positive relationship with our risk indicator (r=.14).

Taken together, the findings reviewed in this section support a strong link between socialization into activism and our measures of risk. Cost, however, is generally unrelated to our socialization measures. When combined with the findings from the previous section, our data allow for an interesting differentiation of high-cost, high-risk activism. The ability to integrate activism and paid employment may allow for greater expenditures of time and energy on behalf of a movement, but it does not necessarily translate into a willingness to engage in riskier forms of activism. That would seem to depend upon the individual's socialization into the role and the subculture of the activists. This interpretation receives strong additional support when we simultaneously assess the effects of the various independent variables reviewed above.

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

The last step of the analysis assesses the combined effects of the microstructural and socialization variables on both cost and risk. To estimate their combined effects on our cost and risk variables, we use ordinary least squares (OLS) regression methods. Some might question our use of OLS regression methods with the dichotomous subjective risk variable because they believe that a logit analysis would be more appropriate. Some researchers have shown that in cases such as ours, where the split on the dependent variable is not highly skewed, logit and the OLS regression methods yield roughly comparable results.
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(Hanushek & Jackson 1977:185). To satisfy ourselves that this was true in our case, we ran separate logit and OLS regressions on the subjective risk measure. The analysis yields similar results with the direction and magnitude of the relationships between our subjective risk measure and each independent variable being comparable in the two cases.\textsuperscript{15}

The results of the OLS regression analysis are shown in Table 6. Turning our attention first to the significant predictors of cost, only one biographical availability variable, age, shows a significant relationship with cost. Consistent with a biographical availability interpretation, age shows the predicted, negative relationship with cost \((b=-.24)\); younger members are more likely to devote more time to movement work than older members.

Considering the effects of the independent variables on our two risk measures, we find the socialization variables are the most significant predictors. Only one biographical availability variable, children living at home, significantly predicts both subjective \((b=.20)\) and objective risk \((b=.23)\). While the direction of the relationships seems to run counter to a biographical availability explanation of activism, we again offer the effects of informal child-care arrangements and older children living at home to account for the effect of children living at home on risk. One socialization variable, religious service attendance, also shows significant effects on both subjective \((b=.20)\) and objective risk \((b=.19)\). This underscores the importance for sanctuary members of interaction in religious contexts for recruitment into those movement activities involving the greatest risk of arrest. Interestingly, another socialization variable — prior activism — also produces significant effects on both indicators of risk. These findings are consistent with McAdam’s (1986) account of recruitment to high-risk activism.

Conclusions

We began our study by simply trying to trace the implications of the premise that “all social movement activities are not created equal.” By studying activists in the same movement, we sought to show that social movement activism can be profitably thought of as differing in terms of cost and risk. Empirically, we have shown that sanctuary movement activities vary in the absolute numbers of participants involved in them. More importantly, we have shown that the concepts of risk and cost are empirically distinguishable and that their personal correlates are distinguishable as well. Of the explanatory factors used to account for differences between cost and risk, it is full-time employment — and we think the ability to integrate work and activism — that serves as the best predictor of the amount of time devoted to sanctuary work.

Further research will be needed to establish the generalizability of this finding. It may well be that this pattern only holds for movements, such as sanctuary, that are deeply embedded in established institutions that afford participants widespread employment opportunities. So, for example, given its strong ties to the Catholic Church, the prolife movement might yield similar findings. In contrast, the relationship between high-cost activism and employment may look very different in movements, such as animal rights, that are seemingly independent of institutional support.
Regarding the risk variables, empirically, with the exception of the indicators of other activism (Tables 4 & 5), there seemed to be little difference in the mix of factors predicting our measures of subjective and objective risk. Conceptually the distinction makes sense; empirically, however, the distinction made minimal difference. It is primarily our socialization measures that differentiate high- from low-risk activists. Two socialization variables, religious service attendance and prior activism, proved to be the most significant predictor of both subjective and objective risk.

But the real significance of this research stems as much from the general point which our results underscore as from the specific findings summarized above. Movement scholars need to pay more theoretical and empirical attention to differences among activists in a single movement. Our research demonstrates the ways in which two such differences, cost and risk, can be profitably employed to distinguish the activist experiences of individuals within a single movement. But it might be equally profitable to differentiate activists on the basis of other theoretically relevant variables, such as gender, race, social class, and age.

Nor should the simple descriptive differentiation of these activists be an end in itself. The ultimate utility of this effort should be judged in terms of how it elucidates two questions — those of recruitment and individual consequences — that have most concerned scholars of individual activism. Ultimately, we will want to know whether the dynamics of recruitment vary by risk and cost and whether the biographical impact of activism varies by the levels of risk and cost associated with participation. The same two questions could be raised in regard to gender, age, social class, and race. Only by using these and perhaps other theoretically meaningful variables to differentiate the activist experiences of movement participants can we ever hope for a full understanding of the causes and consequences of individual activism.

Notes

1. Many individual factors have been proposed as explanations for activism: “authoritarian personality characteristics” (Hoffer 1951; Lipset & Rabb 1973); social isolation and alienation (Aberle 1966; Kornhauser 1959); feelings of “relative deprivation” (Davies 1971; Feierabend, Feierabend & Nesvold 1969; Geschwender 1968; Gurr 1970; Morrison 1973); agreement between movement goals and the values of one’s parents (Block 1972; Flacks 1967; Keniston 1968); selective incentives for participation (Oliver 1984; Oliver, Marwell & Teixeira 1985); prior contact with a member of the movement (Briet, Klandermans & Kroon 1984; Gerlach & Hine 1970; Heirick 1977; McAdam 1986; Orum 1972; Snow, Zurcher & Ekland-Olson 1980); integration into activist networks (Fernandez & McAdam 1988; Rosenthal et al. 1985); and the absence of “biographical constraints” that might otherwise discourage a person from getting involved in a movement (Bromley & Shupe 1979; McAdam 1986; McCarthy & Zald 1973; Snow & Rochford 1983).

2. Although they have generally not tried to operationalize the concepts, movement scholars working in the rational choice tradition have often concerned themselves with issues of cost and risk in individual activism (cf. Friedman 1983; Opp 1989).

3. Of course, there are other dimensions to activity, such as incentives and benefits, the importance of goals, and the likelihood of success. A general theory of social activism would require consideration of these other important dimensions. Our purpose here is much more limited than developing a general theory of social activism. We are merely calling attention to what we feel is an important and neglected dimension of social movement activity.
4. In the summer of 1988, Reverend John Fife, one of the founders of the North American sanctuary movement, told the first author: "This is the year to get a doctorate in sanctuary." Several people had come to Tucson wanting to study the movement. Until recently, there has been surprisingly little study of sanctuary by social scientists (cf. Ferrell & Wiltfang 1988; Hildreth 1989). For the interested reader, there are several journalistic accounts of the movement (e.g., Crittenden 1988; Davidson 1988; Golden & McConnell 1986; MacEoin 1985; MacEoin & Riley 1982; Quammen 1986).

5. Those convicted were sentenced to three to five years probation. The convictions were appealed to the Supreme Court which refused to hear the case. During the senior author's involvement with the movement, two groups of sanctuary workers were stopped near the border by the border patrol. In neither case were the groups prosecuted. However, the cars of several sanctuary workers were confiscated by the INS. After a lengthy legal process and several weeks without the use of their vehicles, the cars were eventually returned to the sanctuary workers. Without "hard" evidence we cannot be sure, but casual evidence suggests that only a very small number of activists have ever been arrested or detained for other types of activism. It is likely that many "play the odds." While the odds are not zero, the chances of arrest for sanctuary activities are probably low. In addition, involvement in other forms of activism, especially high-risk activism, as well as current movement experiences, may work to desensitize activists to the risks associated with movement activities.

6. We use the .05 level of significance when reporting coefficients.

7. Some might question our choice of singling out time as our measure of activity cost. As noted in the text, McAdam (1986) uses time as an example of what he has in mind by the term cost. Also, most people are conscious of time and often complain about not having enough of it. "Not having enough time" is a frequently given reason by individuals for not participating in social movement activities (Snow, Zurcher & Ekland-Olson 1980). Several of the activities listed in Table 1 could serve as measures of cost (e.g., financial contributions or providing refugees with housing or clothing). However, respondents were only asked to check whether they had participated in the activities. Consequently, we only know whether they had participated, not how much they contributed in the way of dollars, days of housing refugees, or the number of articles of clothing they donated or how often they donated to the movement. Given these considerations, time seems to be a reasonable choice for a measure of cost.

8. The correlation between cost and objective risk is .46.

9. Some readers might be puzzled by our obvious neglect of gender; it is a conscious omission on our part. We are well aware of gender's place as a "master status," and its influence on a wide range of social behaviors. It is because of this large and complex influence that we feel a separate article devoted solely to gender's influence on issues of cost and risk is warranted. We agree with feminist critiques of the use of "gender as a variable." For example, Stacey and Thorne (1985) note: "Much of this [empirical sociological studies] . . . is unreflective about the nature of gender as a social category. Gender is assumed to be a property of individuals and is conceptualized in terms of gender difference, rather than as a principle of social organization. Reducing social life to a series of measurable variables diminishes the sense of the whole that is crucial to theoretical understanding of social, including gender, relationships. The use of gender as a variable, rather than as a basic theoretical category, is a prime example of the co-optation of feminist perspectives" (307-8). We feel that to do justice to the influence of gender would carry us well beyond the limitations of this project. For the curious, however, gender is unrelated to either cost or risk.

10. Having made the case for excluding gender from the analysis (note 9), let us say that, given traditional gender role expectations, one place where one might expect significant gender differences to emerge is among the biographical availability variables, especially those related to parenting (i.e., having children and having them at home). When the correlations between the biographical availability variables (Table 2) and the cost/risk variables are examined separately for the women and men of the sample, two noticeable differences emerge, though not for the parenting variables. Marital status shows a negative correlation with cost for men ($r=-.23$), not for women ($r=.00$); and employment status is positively correlated with risk for men ($r=.31$), not for women ($r=.06$). While these findings are interesting, they underscore the point in note 8 above: to do justice to the influence of gender on activism would take us well beyond the specific goals of our study.
11. For our sample of sanctuary participants, ages ranging from 20 to 82 years, the average age is 46.35 years, the mode is 27, and the median age is 43.5.

12. For example, when refugees enter the sanctuary network, they are given a complete physical examination. At one point, there were some 40 health-care professionals providing services to the movement. Two persons working in the records department of a local hospital were able to code refugee records so that they could easily be deleted from hospital files, thereby avoiding any charges or record of treatment. This was often done with the knowledge of the attending physician.

13. This figure includes all unemployed students as well as those subjects who defined themselves as retired or not working.

14. The correlation between the religious service attendance measure and the religious belief item is \( r = .77 \).

15. The only difference in the two analyses concerned the significance of the relationship between age and the subjective risk measure. The logit analysis produced a significant negative relationship between the two variables. In the OLS analysis the relationship, although strong and in the same direction, fell just short of the .10 significance level.

References


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