

# Social movement organization

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In social movement theory, a **social movement organization** (often capitalized in academic literature as Social Movement Organization or abbreviated as **SMO**) is an organized component of a social movement (SM). SMO usually is only part of a particular social movement; in other words, a specific social movement is usually composed of many social movement organizations – formal organizations that share movement's goals.<sup>[1]</sup> Social movement organizations usually have coordinating roles in social movements, but do not actually employ or direct most of the participants, who are part of a wider social movement community. Social movement organizations carry out the tasks that are necessary for any social movement to survive and to be successful.

For instance, the civil rights movement was a social movement composed of specific social movement organizations (like SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) or CORE (Congress of Racial Equality)).<sup>[1]</sup> PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) advocates for vegan lifestyles along with its other aims. But PETA is not the only group to advocate for vegan diets and lifestyles; there are numerous other groups actively engaged toward this end.<sup>[2]</sup> Thus, the social movement is the general push toward veganism (an effort with numerous motivations) and PETA is only a single SMO working within the broader social movement.<sup>[2]</sup> The peace movement is composed of many groups that want peace – groups that classify as SMOs such as Peace Action (SANE/FREEZE), Fellowship of Reconciliation and others.<sup>[3]</sup> Ku Klux Klan is yet another SMO – part of the white supremacist movement.<sup>[4]</sup> Al-Qaeda, acting as a coordinating body for a large number of loosely connected anti-American organizations and individuals is another example of a social movement organization.

An organizational equivalent of a particular social movement – a collection of all SMOs focused on a given field – is known as a Social Movement Industry (SMI).<sup>[1]</sup> Social Movement Industries are similar to social movements in scope but are seen as having more structure.<sup>[5]</sup> Social movement industries can be combined into one Social Movement Sector in the society.<sup>[6]</sup>

The term SMO entered the literature through the work of Mayer N. Zald and Roberta Ash (Zald, Mayer N. and Roberta Ash, *Social Movement Organizations: Growth, Decay and Change*. Social Forces 44:327-341, 1966).<sup>[7]</sup>

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## See also

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- Interest group

- Community organization

## References

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### Notes

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## External links

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- Policy Guide: Studying a Social Movement Organization ([http://www.pineforge.com/leonguerrostudy/policy\\_guide/studying\\_a\\_social\\_movement\\_organization.htm](http://www.pineforge.com/leonguerrostudy/policy_guide/studying_a_social_movement_organization.htm))
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