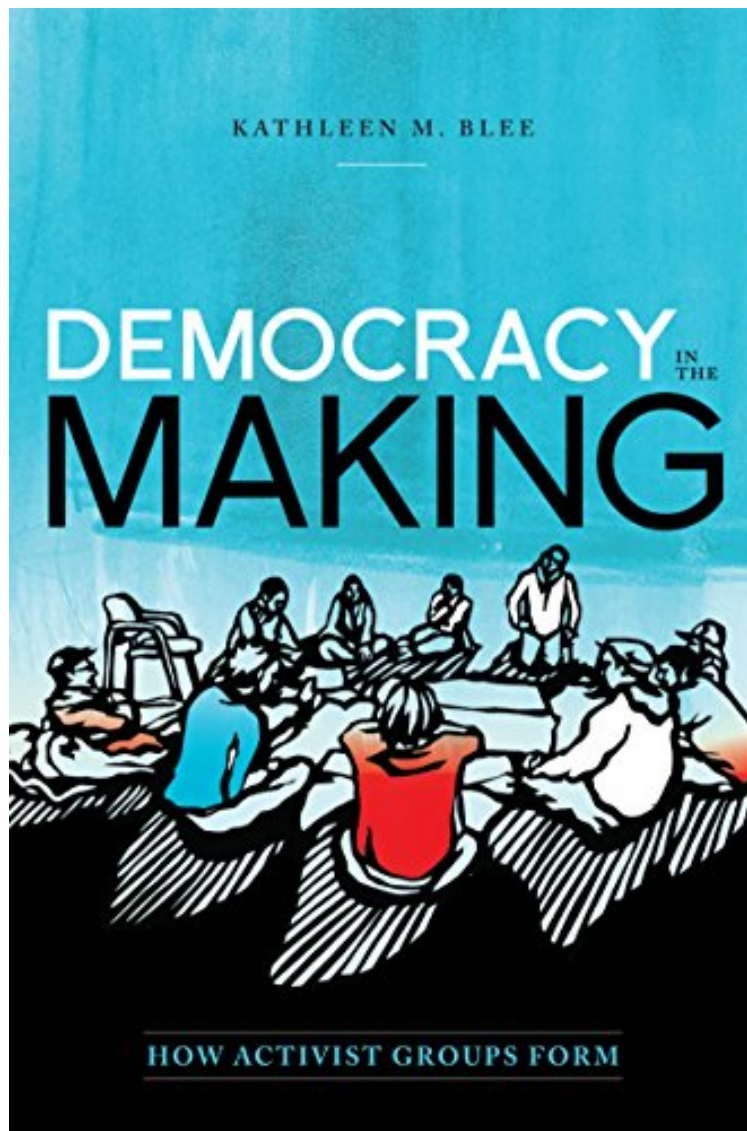


(Mobile book) Democracy in the Making: How Activist Groups Form (Oxford Studies in Culture and Politics)

Democracy in the Making: How Activist Groups Form (Oxford Studies in Culture and Politics)

Kathleen M. Blee

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Kathleen M. Blee : Democracy in the Making: How Activist Groups Form (Oxford Studies in Culture and Politics) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Democracy in the Making: How Activist Groups Form (Oxford Studies in Culture and Politics):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great understanding of the small dynamics that quickly become biggerBy Kevin ReuningGreat understanding of the small dynamics that quickly become bigger. This is a topic that is

rarely focused on in either academia or in activism (at least not from this perspective). Blee does a great job of bringing together what I can only imagine is a voluminous pile of notes. Read it if you want to understand why so many groups fail and the pitfalls that face them.

Winner of the 2012 ARNOVA Outstanding Book in Nonprofit and Voluntary Action Research Award 2013 Charles Tilly Award for Best Book from the American Sociological Association Section on Collective Behavior and Social Movements "Democracy in the Making offers a marvelous synthesis of sociological acumen and hope. Kathleen Blee finds that while social activists often narrow their visions of doable social change, they also can learn together and take surprising new directions with unpredictable results. A wide range of activists will recognize themselves in this book's wonderfully fine-grained portraits of politics at the grassroots." -Paul Lichterman, author of *Elusive Togetherness: Church Groups Trying to Bridge America's Divisions* "This book is an enormous breath of fresh air in an area that often recycles concepts and perspectives. Blee offers a strikingly original approach to grassroots activism that will substantially reorient research in collective action and social movements." -Marc W. Steinberg, Associate Professor of Sociology, Smith College "With civic engagement commonly understood to be on the decline and traditional bases of community and means of engagement increasingly fractured, how do people become involved in collective civic action? How do activist groups form? What hampers the ability of these groups to invigorate political life, and what enables it? Kathleen Blee's groundbreaking new study provides a provocative answer: the early times matter. By following grassroots groups from their very beginnings, Blee traces how their sense of possibility shrinks over time as groups develop a shared sense of who they are that forecloses options that were once open. At the same time, she charts the turning points at which options re-open and groups become receptive to change and reinvention. Based on observing more than sixty grassroots groups in Pittsburgh for three years, *Democracy in the Making* is an unprecedented look at how ordinary people come together to change society. It gives a close-up look at the deliberations of activists on the left and right as they work for animal rights, an end to the drug trade in their neighbourhood, same-sex marriage, global peace, and more. It shows how grassroots activism can provide an alternative to civic disengagement and a forum for envisioning how the world can be transformed. At the same time, it documents how activist groups become mired in dysfunctional and undemocratic patterns that their members dislike, but cannot fix. By analyzing the possibilities and pitfalls that face nascent activist organizations, Blee reveals how critical early choices are to the success of grassroots activism. Vital for scholars and activists alike, this practical yet profound study shows us, through the examples of both groups that flourish and those that flounder, how grassroots activism can better live up to its democratic potential.

"Democracy in the Making offers a marvelous synthesis of sociological acumen and hope. Kathleen Blee finds that while social activists often narrow their visions of doable social change, they also can learn together and take surprising new directions with unpredictable results. A wide range of activists will recognize themselves in this book's wonderfully fine-grained portraits of politics at the grassroots. Scholars and active citizens alike will appreciate *Democracy in the Making* for revealing how group dynamics and past experience shape but never wholly dictate collective action." -Paul Lichterman, author of *Elusive Togetherness: Church Groups Trying to Bridge America's Divisions* "Democracy is not just about institutions and social movements are not just about protest. As Kathleen Blee convincingly demonstrates, activists aim at constructing spaces for the development of conceptions and practices of democracy. Their democratic potentials are, however, not always fulfilled. Theoretically innovative and methodologically rigorous, this study of 69 activist groups investigates the micro-dynamics of mobilization into collective action-its successes and its failures." -Donatella della Porta, Department of Political and Social Sciences, European University Institute "This book is an enormous breath of fresh air in an area that often recycles concepts and perspectives. Blee demonstrates her immense knowledge of the field of social movements and collective action but is bound by none of it. Eschewing the well-worn grooves of current perspectives in which most research is conducted, she offers a strikingly original approach to grassroots activism that will substantially reorient research in collective action and social movements. This is a path-breaking study that refocuses our attention on the processes of activism." - Marc W. Steinberg, Associate Professor of Sociology, Smith College "Kathleen Blee's *Democracy in the Making* is a remarkable book that will reshape much of how we think about social movements." -Mobilization "Blee's book provides much to think about for scholars in social movements, organization studies, and political science. At a minimum, it will show scholars how to effectively examine the development of an organization that is vital to our polity: the activist group. Ideally, this book will spur a deeper scholarly understanding of the mechanisms of modern democracies, something that is sadly ignored in much political theory." -Administrative Science Quarterly "Kathleen M. Blee's *Democracy in the Making* sets out to fill in the picture of social movement origins with an ambitious and original study of new social movement organizations: those just trying to get off the ground with initial meetings and beginning conversations about ideology, strategy, and recruitment. The result is a volume brimming with interesting findings and theoretical contributions that will be of use to a wide range of both scholars and activists. Blee provides...a sophisticated microlevel path-dependency argument that greatly expands our understanding of how social

movement groups form." -American Journal of Sociology" Blee offers rich data and keen theoretical insights that contribute to our understanding of the organizational processes that explain the high mortality of some new organizations and by implication, the processes that promote the success and survival of others." --Susan M. Chambréacute;, City University of New York, INonprofit and Voluntary Sector QuarterlyAbout the Author Kathleen M. Blee is Distinguished Professor of Sociology at the University of Pittsburgh. A renowned scholar of activism in the U.S., from the left to the far-right, her work on racist movements is published in the award-winning books, Inside Organized Racism: Women in the Hate Movement and Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s.