Power in Movement

Social Movements and Contentious Politics

Updated and Revised 3rd Edition

Sidney Tarrow

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Power in Movement, Revised and Updated Third Edition

Social movements have an elusive power but one that is altogether real. From the French and American Revolutions to the post-Soviet, ethnic, and terrorist movements of today, contentious politics exercises a fleeting but powerful influence on politics, society, and international relations. This study surveys the history of the modern social movements in the West and their diffusion to the global South through war and colonialism and puts forward a theory to explain their cyclical surges and declines. It offers an interpretation of the power of movements that emphasizes their effects on the lives of militants, policy reforms, political institutions, and cultural change. The book focuses on the rise and fall of social movements as part of contentious politics as the outcome of changes in political opportunities and constraints, state strategy, the new media of communication, and transnational diffusion.

Sidney G. Tarrow is Maxwell M. Upson Professor of Government and Professor of Sociology at Cornell University. His recent books include *Dynamics of Contention* (with Doug McAdam and Charles Tilly), *Contentious Europeans* (with Doug Imig), *Transnational Protest and Global Activism* (coedited with Donatella della Porta), *The New Transnational Activism*, and *Contentious Politics* (with Charles Tilly). He is currently researching war, state building, and human rights.

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For DEA and J LaP –
Mentors, colleagues, friends

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Introduction

On May 30th, 2010, six ships left Turkey and approached the coast of Israel/Palestine to deliver supplies to the coastal enclave of Gaza. Most of the ships were owned by a Turkish NGO called the IHH (İnsani Yardım Vakfi, or Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms).[1] On board were over 600 peace, humanitarian, and pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel activists determined to break the blockade with which, since 2007, Israel had been strangling the economy of Gaza. Approaching the coast, the flotilla was attacked from sea and air by an Israeli commando squadron. When the attack ended, nine activists lay dead or dying, and a number of Israeli commandos were wounded, some of them seriously.

How did this happen, and what does it have to do with "contentious politics"? In 2007, the Gaza Strip, a detached part of the Palestinian territories, was taken over from the more moderate Palestinian governmental party, Fatah, in a bloody coup by the radical Hamas group. From that point on, the Israeli army began to limit access to Gaza, both for fear of arms getting into the hands of Hamas militants, who had been attacking Israeli settlements, and to isolate Hamas, an Islamist group that continued to call for Israel's destruction. Those measures were not sufficient to prevent home-made missiles from killing Israelis living in towns near the border. Under pressure from public opinion and with an election approaching, in January 2009, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) launched a massive land and air attack on the population of Gaza, destroying thousands of buildings, damaging a UN humanitarian center, and killing over a thousand people.

[1] The IHH describes itself as an Islamic charity that was formed to provide aid to Bosnia in the mid-1990s. It has been involved in aid missions in Africa and Asia and in the Palestinian territories, and it played an important role in provisioning Gaza after the Israeli blockade began in 2007. The IHH is technically an NGO, but it maintains ties with the ruling Islamist Justice and Development Party in Turkey. Its top fundraisers are Turkey's Islamist merchant class. The organization is banned in Israel. For more information, go to www.ihh.org.tr/Haber_Manset_Ayrintilar.160±M5563920baaa.0.html (in Turkish).

After the January 2009 "operation," Israeli pressure became even greater, turning Gaza into a virtual prison for the million-and-a-half Palestinians living there. While Israel allowed in food and medicine, it controlled water and electricity supplies and blocked the entry of anything that could conceivably be used to construct weapons – including fertilizer, metal, and computer chips, as well as a list of nuisance items that included, at one time or another, light bulbs, candles, matches, books, musical instruments, crayons, clothing, coffee, tea, cookies, and shampoo.

The blockade had three major defects: First, it increased the influence of foreign humanitarian groups, including the IHH. Second, it had a devastating impact on Gaza's economy, increasing the power of Hamas through which almost all foreign aid was distributed. And third, it created a flourishing underground economy and a class of smugglers bringing in supplies through tunnels from Egypt. This led to constant Israeli attacks on the smugglers' tunnels and to rising tensions between Israel and Egypt. Cut off from the world, unable to get the supplies needed to rebuild their homes, the Gazans relied on the sympathy of fellow Arabs, the United Nations, various humanitarian groups, mainly from Western Europe, and Turkey, since 2002 under the leadership of a moderately Islamist party attempting to better its relations with fellow Muslims in the Middle East.

In January 2010, planning began for the flotilla that would leave Turkey in May to try to challenge the blockade. The IHH "brought large boats and millions of dollars of donations to a cause that had struggled to gain attention and aid the Palestinians. Particularly galling to Israel," the *New York Times* noted, "is the fact that the group comes from Turkey, an ally, but one whose relations with Israel have become increasingly strained."[2] Both directly and through its ties with the Turkish government, the Israeli government gave warnings to turn back, but the flotilla's leaders refused, and on the 31st, a squadron of Israeli warships and helicopter gunships attacked.

The flotilla was not unprepared: When Israeli commandos were lowered onto the ships on ropes from their helicopters, they were at first overwhelmed by well-trained Islamist militants. Several of the Israeli soldiers lost their weapons, which were turned on the attackers. But the numbers and the firepower of the IDF proved too much for the defenders. When the melee ended, nine militants had been killed and a number of Israeli attackers wounded, two of them seriously.

Although the IHH action was deliberately provocative,[3] seldom was there so stark a contrast between the peaceful tactics of a movement and the violent response of its target. Though an Israeli government spokesman painted the activists as "an armada of hate and violence in support of the Hamas terror

[2] *New York Times,* June 1, 2010.

[3] As a board member of the group said, "We became famous; we are very thankful to the Israeli authorities." *New York Times,* June 1, 2010.

organisation . . . ,"[4] the international press and progressive groups responded with outrage. Predictably, the Arab and Palestinian press were the most violent in their denunciations, but the European press was almost as vehement; the usually conservative *Economist* editorialized, "A policy of trying to imprison the Palestinians has left their jailer strangely besieged."[5] More surprising, the normally pro-Israeli *New York Times* pronounced that the Israeli blockade must end.[6]

Governments around the world were quick to respond. Denmark, France, Greece, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Egypt, and South Africa all summoned Israeli ambassadors to condemn the attack. Greece suspended joint military exercises, and Turkey withdrew its ambassador and cancelled military cooperation and joint water projects. Leftwing governments, such as Nicaragua's, suspended diplomatic relations, but even more friendly governments, such as Ireland's, cancelled an appearance of Israel's ambassador before a parliamentary committee.[7] Most important, Israel's only ally, the United States, condemned the violence and called for an end to the boycott of Gaza.

But more striking than the reactions of the press or the politicians was the overwhelming reaction of nonstate actors around the world. Civil society groups, social movements, unions, and religious groups (including some Jewish ones) condemned the attack on the flotilla and organized protests in dozens of cities. In the Arab world, 285 civil society groups signed a statement against the Israeli action; in South Africa, unions called for making every municipality an "Apartheid Israel Free Zone"; in Britain, UNITE called for a policy of divestment in Israeli companies; in Norway, the chair of the largest Norwegian union federation called for divestment by the state's pension fund; and in Sweden, the port workers' union called for a boycott of Israeli ships.[8] A number of other groups – including a coalition of European Jews – either immediately launched ships in the direction of Gaza or planned to do so in the near future.

The most widespread response was a call for a boycott.[9] And in the days after the attack, a number of well-known performance artists cancelled their

[4] Statement of Danny Ayalon, Deputy Foreign Minister, on May 31, 2010, quoted in www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/may/31/q-a-gaza-freedom-flotilla. Visited on June 8, 2010.

[5] *The Economist* went on to point out that the attack on a Turkish ship and the killing of nine Turkish citizens (one of them with a U.S. passport as well) "is depriving Israel of a rare Muslim ally and mediator." *The Economist*, June 5th–11th, 2010, pp. 13–14.

[6] *The Times* criticized the Obama Administration's tepid response to the attack, urging the government to join other major powers in calling for an end of the blockade. *New York Times*, June 1, 2010. President Obama satisfied himself by characterizing the blockade as "unsustainable." Visited at www.nytimes.com/2010/06/02/opinion/02wed1.html, June 10, 2010.

[7] These selected reactions are reported in "Activism News" on its Web site at electronicintifada.net/v2/article11318.shtml. Visited June 7, 2010.

[8] These reports also come from "Activism News," cited in note no. 7.

[9] The diffusion of the boycott call was remarkable. A simple Google search for "Gaza & boycott" came up with more than one million five hundred thousand "hits." A narrower search for "Gaza & boycott & unions" produced 568,000. And what I thought would produce only a few "hits" – a search for "Gaza & boycott & *artists*" – led to 182,000 hits!

appearances in Israel. What had begun as an effort by a radical Islamist group to break a blockade ended in a global wave of negative publicity and a widespread call to boycott Israel, whose leaders refused to cooperate with an international investigation of the killings. But the combination of the brazen attempt to break the blockade, the killing of nine civilians in international waters, and the widespread condemnation of Israel's behavior did have consequences. In the United States, it began to dawn on foreign policy elites that the Israeli alliance was becoming a liability.[10] In the World Zionist Congress, a split occurred between a liberal majority that urged the Israeli government to soften its stand and a vocal minority that attempted to block the majority resolution.[11] And in Israel itself, in late June, the government bowed to international pressure and agreed to soften the blockade.[12]

WHAT WAS HAPPENING HERE?

What does the story of the Israeli attack on the Turkish-led "flotilla" tell us? We could interpret it in moral terms, either as the attempt of an intrepid band of missionaries to help their desperate co-religionists, or as the justified attempt of a besieged nation to protect its security. We could see it as an example of how small-power politics can threaten to up-end big-power relationships. We could also see it as an example of what I call "contentious politics" – what happens when collective actors join forces in confrontation with elites, authorities, and opponents around their claims or the claims of those they claim to represent.

From a contentious politics perspective, we can take away seven important lessons from the Israeli attack on the flotilla and the response to it:

First, the range of actors in the story goes well beyond the traditional subject of "social movements." Two major states, Israel and Turkey, the Islamist movement Hamas, a flotilla packed with humanitarian, peace, and pro-Palestinian NGOs, Israeli voters, European unions and governments, and global public opinion all came together in the conflict over Gaza. If we were to focus only on social movements, we would have told a rather truncated story. In this book, I will develop a relational approach to contentious politics, which focuses more

[10] As the usually conservative American security commentator Anthony Cordesman wrote,

> "... the depth of America's moral commitment does not justify or excuse actions by an Israeli government that unnecessarily make Israel a strategic liability when it should remain an asset."

Go to www.normanfinkelstein.com/anthony-cordesman-is-whistling-a-new-tune/. Visited June 8, 2010.

[11] For a report from a surprised liberal group that was involved in passing the resolution, go to www.jstreet.org/blog/?p-1110. Visited June 18, 2010.

[12] The Security Cabinet's decision can be found at http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMOEng/Communication/Spokesman/2010/06/spokemediniyut170610.htm. Visited June 18, 2010.

on the interactions among divergent actors than on the classical subject of social movements.

Second, the story shows how, under certain conditions, even small and temporary groups of collective actors can have explosive effects on powerful states. Without the provocation of the "freedom flotilla," it is doubtful that the world's attention would have focused on the festering sore of Gaza, or that Israel would have softened its blockade.

Third, the story illustrates the importance of spirals of *political opportunities and threats* in opening windows for contentious politics. Even in Israel, Leftist opposition groups gathered to protest the Israeli raid and were met with hostility by rightwing opponents.[13] We will give great attention to such spirals and to the "cycles of contention" that they constitute.

Fourth, the story tells us that we cannot understand episodes of contention without examining how contentious and institutional politics – including electoral politics – intersect. In the spring of 2010, Israel was governed by a weak and divided center-right coalition under a leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, who had already shown his willingness to bow to extreme xenophobic opinion. The threats to his government from the Right were important factors in the decision to attack the flotilla – an action that produced an opportunity for movement actors to mobilize. In this book, I will give particular attention to the interaction among contentious and institutional politics.

Fifth, the story shows the importance of what I will call "modular performances and repertoires" of collective action. The boycott is by now a familiar form of contention, instantly recognizable around the world. But it wasn't always so; contentious politics has to be *learned,* and once forms of contention are seen to be viable, they diffuse rapidly and become modular. So common is the boycott form that pro-Israeli groups responded to the Swedish boycott threat with a boycott threat of their own![14] An important theme of this book is the modularity of forms of contention and their diffusion.

Sixth, the story demonstrates the growing importance of transnational networking and mobilization, including mobilization through the Internet. Not only did the activists on the flotilla come from across the sea and represent several nations; an almost instant and overwhelming response to their actions came from around the world – including from the international Zionist community. We will investigate this growth of transnational contention and ask whether it is giving rise to a "global civil society."

Finally, the story shows how widespread what we will call the "social movement repertoire" has become. Some scholars have wondered whether the world is becoming "a social movement society" (Meyer and Tarrow, eds. 1998). But that term first surfaced in the 1990s, when it seemed that peaceful forms of contentious action were spreading among ordinary people. With the turn of

[13] Go to http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/leftist-and-rightist-israelis-clash-at-gaza-flotilla-protest-in-tel-aviv-1.294359 for a report on this clash. Visited June 8, 2010.

[14] Go to www.israelforum.com/board/showthread.php?t=10127. Visited June 7, 2010.

the new century, and especially after September 11, 2001, the phrase "social movement society" has taken on a new and more forbidding meaning. We will ask whether transgressive politics is beginning to overwhelm contained politics, and, if so, what are its implications for civil politics. But first we must clarify two key terms that will be employed in this book and their relationship to one another: social movements and contentious politics.

Social Movements in Contentious Politics

Ordinary people often try to exert power by contentious means against national states or opponents. In the last fifty years alone, the American Civil Rights movement, the peace, environmental and feminist movements, revolts against authoritarianism in both Europe and the Third World, and the rise of new Islamist movements have brought masses of people into the streets demanding change. They often succeeded, but even when they failed, their actions set in motion important political, cultural, and international changes.

Contentious politics occurs when ordinary people – often in alliance with more influential citizens and with changes in public mood – join forces in confrontation with elites, authorities, and opponents. Such confrontations go back to the dawn of history. But mounting, coordinating, and sustaining them against powerful opponents is the unique contribution of the social movement – an invention of the modern age and an accompaniment of the rise of the modern state. Contentious politics is triggered when changing political opportunities and constraints create incentives to take action for actors who lack resources on their own. People contend through known repertoires of contention and expand them by creating innovations at their margins. When backed by well-structured social networks and galvanized by culturally resonant, action-oriented symbols, contentious politics leads to sustained interaction with opponents – to social movements.

How ordinary people take advantage of incentives created by shifting opportunities and constraints; how they combine conventional and challenging repertoires of action; how they transform social networks and cultural frameworks into action – and with what outcomes; how these and other factors combine in major cycles of protest and sometimes in revolutions; how the Internet and other forms of electronic communication are changing the nature of mobilization; and how the social movement is changing in the twenty-first century – these are the main themes of this book.

These themes take on special moment given the vast spread and growing diversity of contentious politics today. Just think of the variety of social movements since the 1960s: first civil rights and student movements; ecology, feminism, and peace movements; struggles for human rights in authoritarian and semi-authoritarian systems; Islamic and Jewish religious extremism in the Middle East and Hindu militantism in India; anti-immigrant violence in Western Europe and Christian fundamentalism in the United States; ethnic nationalism in the Balkans and the former Soviet Union; and suicide bombings in Iraq,

Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Over the past five decades, a wave of new forms of contention has spread from one region of the world to another, and among different social and political actors.

Not all these events warrant the term "social movement," a term I will reserve for sequences of contentious politics based on underlying social networks, on resonant collective action frames, and on the capacity to maintain sustained challenges against powerful opponents (see Chapter 1). But all are part of the broader universe of contentious politics, which emerges, on the one hand, from within institutional politics, and can expand, on the other, into revolution. Placing the social movement and its particular dynamics historically and analytically within this universe of contentious politics is a central goal of this study.

The Approach of the Study

In this book, I will not attempt to write a history of social movements or the broader field of contentious politics. Nor will I press a particular theoretical perspective on my readers or attack others – a practice that has added more heat than light to the subject. Instead, I will offer a broad theoretical framework for understanding the place of social movements, cycles of contention, and revolutions within the more general category of contentious politics. Too often, scholars have focused on particular theories or aspects of movements to the detriment of others. One example is how the subject of revolution has been treated. It is mainly seen in comparison with other revolutions, but in isolation from ordinary politics and almost never compared with the cycles of protest that it in some ways resembles (but see Goldstone 1998). We need a broader framework with which to connect social movements to contentious politics and to politics in general.[15] This book takes up this challenge.

CONTENTIOUS COLLECTIVE ACTION

The irreducible act that lies at the base of all social movements, protests, rebellions, riots, strike waves, and revolutions is *contentious collective action*. Collective action can take many forms – brief or sustained, institutionalized or disruptive, humdrum or dramatic. Most of it occurs routinely within institutions, on the part of constituted groups acting in the name of goals that would hardly raise an eyebrow. Collective action becomes contentious when it is used by people who lack regular access to representative institutions, who act in the name of new or unaccepted claims, and who behave in ways that fundamentally challenge others or authorities.

Contentious collective action serves as the basis of social movements, not because movements are always violent or extreme, but because it is the main and often the only recourse that most ordinary people possess to demonstrate

[15] For this argument with illustrative syntheses, see McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001.

their claims against better-equipped opponents or powerful states. This does not mean that movements do nothing else but contend: they build organizations, elaborate ideologies, and socialize and mobilize constituencies, and their members engage in self-development and the construction of collective identities. Moreover, some movements are largely a-political, and focus on their internal lives or those of their members. But even such movements, as sociologist Craig Calhoun reminds us, encounter authorities in conflictual ways, because it is these authorities who are responsible for law and order and for setting the norms for society (1994b: 21). Organizers exploit political opportunities, respond to threats, create collective identities, and bring people together to mobilize them against more powerful opponents. Much of the history of movement/state interaction can be read as a duet of strategy and counterstrategy between movement activists and power holders.

"Collective action" is not an abstract category that is outside of history and stands apart from politics (Hardin, 1982; 1995). Contentious forms of collective action are different from market relations, lobbying, or representative politics because they bring ordinary people into confrontation with opponents, elites, or authorities. This means that the particular historical, cultural, and power conditions of their society in part determine and in part are determined by contentious politics. Ordinary people have power because they challenge power holders, produce solidarities, and have meaning to particular population groups, situations, and national cultures.

This means that we will have to embed the general formulations of collective action theory into history with the insights of sociology and political science and anthropology. In particular, we will see that bringing people together in sustained interaction with opponents requires a *social* solution – aggregating people with different demands and identities and in different locations in concerted campaigns of collective action. This involves, first, mounting collective challenges, second, drawing on social networks, common purposes, and cultural frameworks, and third, building solidarity through connective structures and collective identities to sustain collective action. These are the basic properties of social movements.

The Basic Properties of Movements

With the emergence of the social movement in the eighteenth century, as I will show in Part I, early theorists focused on the three facets of movements that they feared the most: extremism, deprivation, and violence. Both the French Revolution and early nineteenth century industrialism lent strength to this negative reaction. Led by sociologist Emile Durkheim (1951), nineteenth century observers saw social movements as the result of anomie and social disorganization – an image well captured in the phrase "the madding crowd" (see the review in McPhail 1991).

While the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the normalization of movement activism into Social Democratic and Labor Parties, the

movements of the interwar period – in the form of Italian fascism, German Nazism, and Soviet Stalinism – fit the image of violence and extremism fostered earlier by the French and Industrial Revolutions. With the exacerbation of ethnic and nationalist tensions after the fall of communism in 1989–1992 and the terrorist outrages of the first decade of the twenty-first century, this negative view of social movements has been reinforced. We saw this view reemerge in the "ancestral hatred" views of the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s, most of them uninformed by social movement theory. We saw it again in the anti-immigrant violence in Europe, which evoked the horrors of the interwar years. And we see it most dramatically in the reactions to the militantism of Al Queda and other Islamist movements since the turn of the century.

But these are extreme versions of more fundamental characteristics of social movements. Extremism is an exaggerated form of the dramatization of meaning that is found in all social movements – what I will call in Chapter 7 "movement framing"; deprivation is a particular form of the common purposes that all movements express; and violence is an exacerbation of collective challenges, often the product of public clashes with police, rather than the intention of activists. Rather than defining social movements as expressions of extremism, violence, and deprivation, they are better defined as *collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities.*[16] This definition has four empirical properties: collective challenge, common purpose, social solidarity, and sustained interaction. (For a similar definition, see Tilly and Wood 2009.) Let us examine each of these briefly before turning to an outline of the book.

COLLECTIVE CHALLENGES

Collective action has many forms – from voting and interest group affiliation to bingo tournaments and football matches. But these are not the forms of action most characteristic of social movements. Movements characteristically mount *contentious* challenges through disruptive direct action against elites, authorities, other groups, or cultural codes. Most often public in nature, disruption can also take the form of coordinated personal resistance or the collective affirmation of new values (Melucci 1996).

Contentious collective challenges most often are marked by interrupting, obstructing, or rendering uncertain the activities of others. But particularly in

[16] Charles Tilly writes:

> Authorities and thoughtless historians commonly describe popular contention as disorderly.... But the more closely we look at that same contention, the more we discover order. We discover order created by the rooting of collective action in the routines and organization of everyday social life, and by its involvement in a continuous process of signaling, negotiation, and struggle with other parties whose interests the collective action touches.

See his *The Contentious French* (1986: 4).

authoritarian systems, where overt protest is likely to be repressed, they can also be symbolized by slogans, forms of dress or music, graffiti, or renaming of familiar objects with new or different symbols. Even in democratic states, people identify with movements by words, forms of dress or address, and private behavior that signify their collective purpose.[17]

Contention is not limited to social movements, though contention is their most characteristic way of interacting with other actors. Interest groups sometimes engage in direct challenges, as do political parties, voluntary associations, and groups of ordinary citizens who have nothing in common but a temporary coincidence of claims against others (Burstein 1998). Nor are contentious challenges the only form of action we see in movements. Movements – especially organized ones – engage in a variety of actions ranging from providing "selective incentives" to members, to building consensus among current or prospective supporters, to lobbying and negotiating with authorities, to challenging cultural codes through new religious or personal practices.

In recent decades, just as interest groups and others have increasingly engaged in contentious politics, movement leaders have become skilled at combining contention with participation in institutions. Think of the healthcare debate that roiled American politics in 2009–2010. Although it was dominated rhetorically by the debate in Congress and financially by well-heeled Washington lobbies, much of the public saw it through the lens of the so-called "Tea Parties" – in imitation of the Boston Tea Party, which helped to touch off the American Revolution – and the "town meetings" at which well-orchestrated challenges were organized against members of Congress who supported reform (see Chapter 5).

Despite their growing expertise in lobbying, legal challenges, and public relations, the most characteristic actions of social movements continue to be contentious challenges. This is not because movement leaders are psychologically prone to violence, but because they lack the stable resources – money, organization, access to the state – that interest groups and parties control. In appealing to new constituencies and asserting claims, contention may be the only resource that movements control. Movements use collective challenge to become the focal points of supporters, gain the attention of opponents and third parties, and create constituencies to represent.

COMMON PURPOSES

Many reasons have been proposed for why people affiliate with social movements, ranging from the desire of young people to flaunt authority all the way to the vicious instincts of the mob. While it is true that some movements are marked by a spirit of play and carnival and others reveal the grim frenzy of the mob, there is a more common – if more prosaic – reason why people band

[17] Such movements have been characterized as "discursive" by political scientist Mary Katzenstein, who studied the movement of radical Catholic women in America in her *Faithful and Fearless* (1998). I will return to the relations between discourse and collective action in Chapter 7.

together in movements: to mount common claims against opponents, authorities, or elites. Not all such conflicts arise out of class interest, but common or overlapping interests and values are at the basis of their common actions.

Both the theory of "fun and games" and that of mob frenzy ignore the considerable risks and costs involved in acting collectively against well-armed authorities. The rebel slaves who challenged the Roman Empire risked certain death when they were defeated; the dissenters who launched the Protestant Reformation against the Catholic Church took similar risks. Nor could the African American college students who sat-in at segregated lunch counters in the American South expect much fun at the hands of the thugs who awaited them with baseball bats and abuse. People do not risk their skin or sacrifice their time to engage in contentious politics unless they have good reason to do so. It takes a common purpose to spur people to run the risks and pay the costs of contentious politics.

SOCIAL SOLIDARITY

The most common denominator of social movements is thus "interest," but interest is no more than a seemingly objective category imposed by the observer. It is participants' *recognition* of their common interests that translates the potential for a movement into action. By mobilizing consensus, movement entrepreneurs play an important role in stimulating such consensus. But leaders can create a social movement only when they tap into and expand deep-rooted feelings of solidarity or identity. This is almost certainly why nationalism and ethnicity or religion have been more reliable bases of movement organization in the past than the categorical imperative of social class (Anderson 1990; C. Smith ed. 1996).[18]

Is an isolated incident of contention – for instance, a riot or a mob – a social movement? Usually not, because participants in these forms of contention typically have no more than temporary solidarity and cannot sustain their challenges against opponents. But sometimes, even riots reveal hints of a common purpose or solidarity. The ghetto riots all over America in the 1960s or in Los Angeles in 1992 were not movements in themselves, but the fact that they were triggered by police abuse indicates that they arose out of a widespread sense of injustice. Mobs, riots, and spontaneous assemblies are more an indication that a movement is in the process of formation than movements themselves.

SUSTAINING CONTENTION

Long before organized movements began, contentious politics took many forms on the scene of history – from food riots and tax rebellions to religious wars

[18] Some students of social movements take the criterion of common consciousness to an extreme. Rudolf Heberle, for example, thought a movement had to have a well worked-out ideology. See his *Social Movements: An Introduction to Political Sociology* (1951). But others, such as Alberto Melucci, think that movements purposefully "construct" collective identities through constant negotiation. See Melucci's "Getting Involved: Identity and Mobilization in Social Movements" (1988).

and revolutions – as we will see in Chapter 2. It is only by sustaining collective action against antagonists that a contentious episode becomes a social movement. Common purposes, collective identities, and identifiable challenges help movements to do this; but unless they can maintain their challenge, movements will evaporate into the kind of individualistic resentment that James Scott calls "resistance" (1985), will harden into intellectual or religious sects, or their members will defect from activism into isolation. Sustaining collective action in interaction with powerful opponents marks the social movement off from the earlier forms of contention that preceded it in history and accompany it today.

Yet movements are seldom under the control of a single leader or organization; how can they sustain collective challenges in the face of personal fear or egotism, social disorganization, and state repression? This is the dilemma that has animated collective action theorists and social movement scholars over the past few decades. My strongest argument will be that it is changes in public political opportunities and constraints that create the most important incentives for triggering new phases of contention for people with collective claims. These actions in turn create new opportunities both for the original insurgents and for late-comers, and eventually for opponents and power holders. The cycles of contention – and in rare cases, the revolutions – that ensue are based on the externalities that these actors enjoy and create. The outcomes of such waves of contention depend not on the justice of the cause or the persuasive power of any single movement, but on their breadth and on the reactions of elites and other groups.

I will turn to these political opportunities and constraints in Chapter 8. But here it is important to underscore what I do *not* mean by this. I do not claim that "objective" opportunities automatically trigger episodes of contentious politics or social movements, regardless of what people think or feel. Individuals need to *perceive* political opportunities and to be *emotionally engaged by their claims* if they are to be induced to participate in possibly risky and certainly costly collective actions; and they need to *perceive* constraints if they are to hesitate to take such actions. As we will see in the following chapters, individuals are often slow to appreciate that opportunities exist or that constraints have collapsed. This in turn helps to explain the important role of movement entrepreneurs in launching efforts such as the "freedom flotilla" – individuals and groups who seize opportunities, demonstrate their availability to others, and thereby trigger the cycles of contention that will be discussed in Chapter 10. It also explains why so many movements tragically fail – because their leaders perceive opportunities that are either weak or evanescent.

An Outline of the Book

In the past twenty years, and influenced by economic thought, some political scientists and sociologists began their analyses of social movements from the puzzle that collective action is often difficult to bring about. That puzzle added a lot to social movement theorizing, but it is only a puzzle – not a sociological

law – because, in so many situations and against so many odds, collective action often *does* occur, on the part of people with few resources and little permanent power (Lichbach 1995).

Examining the parameters of collective action is the first task of Chapter 1. But the book will also approach three equally important problems: First, what are the dynamics of mobilization once it has begun; second, why are movement outcomes so varied; and, third, why do they so often fail to achieve their stated goals? Although Chapter 1 outlines these theories in a general way, evidence for them will be found in the movements and episodes analyzed in the remainder of the book.

In Part I, I will show how and where the national social movement developed, first in the eighteenth century West, where the resources for turning collective action into social movements could first be brought together over sustained periods and across territorial space, and then in more recent periods of history around the world. The focus of Chapter 2 is on what I will call, following the work of Charles Tilly, the modern "repertoire" of collective action. Then, in Chapter 3, I will turn to the changes in society that supported that transformation and, in Chapter 4, to the impact of capitalism and state building on the crystallization of modern contentious politics. Once the main forms of "modular collective action" were established, social movements could be diffused through Western state expansion, through print and association, and through the diffusion of these repertoires, first across the West and then across the globe. That will be the argument of Chapters 2 to 4 of the book.

But even deep-seated claims remain inert unless they can be activated. Part II will outline the four main powers that activate claims into action. In Chapter 5, I will examine the three main forms of contentious politics that movements employ – violence, disruption, and contained forms of action. In Chapter 6, I will deal with the major social and organizational bases that help to form movement organizations. In Chapter 7, I will examine how movements "make meanings," by constructing identities, mobilizing emotions, and developing collective action "frames." In Chapter 8, I will examine the kinds of political opportunities that trigger episodes of contention and the kinds of threats – especially threats from the state and the police – that limit them. These are the four main powers I see in movement.

In the third section of the book, I will turn from these analytical aspects of contentious politics and social movements to their interaction and dynamics. Contentious politics is nothing if it is not relational. Chapter 9 lays out an interactive approach to contentious politics that is based on the specification and examination of a number of key mechanisms: mechanisms such as mobilization and demobilization; campaign building and coalition formation; diffusion and scale shift; and radicalization and institutionalization.

These mechanisms are the analytical building blocks of the cycles of contention that will be studied in Chapter 10. The argument of this chapter is that once a cycle of contention is triggered, coalitions are formed, campaigns are organized, and the costs of collective action are lowered for other actors, and

master frames and models of activism become more generally available. The movements that arise in such contexts do not depend as much on their internal resources as on generalized opportunities in their societies, and elites respond less to single movements than to the general context of contention that they must deal with.

Such periods of generalized disorder sometimes result in immediate repression, sometimes in reform, often in both. But in political/institutional and personal/cultural terms, the effects of cycles of contention seldom correspond to a single movement's visible goals. These effects are noted both in the changes that governments initiate and in the periods of demobilization that follow. They leave behind permanent expansions in participation, in popular culture, and in ideology, as I will argue in Chapter 11.

If the national social movement was linked to the rise of the modern national state, the central question raised by the latest wave of contention is whether we are seeing the development of a *transnational* movement culture that threatens the structure and sovereignty of the national state. The same question can be asked of the plethora of transnational "NGOs" and civil society groups that have sprung up around the globe in the last few decades. As routine and bureaucratic in their way as protests against international institutions are disruptive and erratic, these transnational NGOs play an increasing role in linking domestic social movements both to one another and to the institutions that are increasingly responsible for regulating the global economy, fighting climate change, and attempting to combat human rights abuses. These are the questions I will turn to in Chapter 12.

This will take us, in the conclusions, to the contentious politics of the current epoch and to three important new issues: "globalization," lethal conflict, and the interactions between movements and states. In the last decades of the twentieth century, a wave of democratization spread across the world, culminating in dramatic changes in southern Europe in the 1970s, in Latin America in the 1980s, and in Central and Eastern Europe after the fall of communism. But also in the 1990s, a new wave of "ugly" movements, rooted in ethnic and nationalist claims, in religious fanaticism, and in racism, broke out, bringing the world to a peak of turbulence and violence that it has not known for decades. Radical changes in electronic communication and cheap international transportation have reinforced these connections, creating the possibility of a new age of "global" social movements, but they have also given states unprecedented capacities for suppression.

Where protest and contention have become easier to mount and are largely legitimized; where police and power holders prefer to discuss tactics and issues with movements rather than repress them; where the media or the courts settle questions that once were fought over in the streets – in these conditions, will the historical form of the social movement be absorbed into ordinary politics, as were the strike and the demonstration in the last century? Or will the sheer volume of contention submerge the routine processes of electoral and interest

group participation in a turbulent sea of unruly politics? The shape of the future will depend not on how violent or widespread contention has become, but on how it relates to states, capitalism, and the international system. Because all three of these are undergoing profound change, in the century that lies ahead, the world may be experiencing a new and far-reaching power in movement.

1

Contentious Politics and Social Movements

In this book, I will argue that contentious politics emerges in response to changes in political opportunities and threats when participants perceive and respond to a variety of incentives: material and ideological, partisan and group-based, long-standing and episodic. Building on these opportunities, and using known repertoires of action, people with limited resources can act together contentiously – if only sporadically. When their actions are based on dense social networks and effective connective structures and draw on legitimate, action-oriented cultural frames, they can sustain these actions even in contact with powerful opponents. In such cases – and *only* in such cases – we are in the presence of a social movement. When such contention spreads across an entire society – as it sometimes does – we see a cycle of contention. When such a cycle is organized around opposed or multiple sovereignties, the outcome is a revolution.

The solutions to the problem of mobilizing people into campaigns and coalitions of collective action depend on shared understandings, social networks, and connective structures and the use of culturally resonant forms of action. But above all – I shall argue – they are triggered by the ebb and flow of political struggle. In this chapter, I will lay out each of these factors as they will be used in this book to describe, analyze, and raise questions about contentious politics and social movements. Before doing so, however, it will be helpful to see how scholars – associated with four classical traditions – have conceived of the problem of collective action and its relation to grievances, resources, cultural frames, and political struggle. We will begin with the origins of social movement theory in the works of Marxist and post-Marxist scholars, before turning to the current generation of social scientific work on contentious politics.

MARX, LENIN, GRAMSCI, AND TILLY

Many sociologists trace the lineage of the field of social movements to society's negative reactions to the horrors of the French Revolution and to the outrage

of the crowd.[1] Although writers such as Tarde (1989) and Le Bon (1977) make a convenient polemical starting point for theorists who reject their ideas, their work in fact was an offshoot of crowd psychology. In this book, conflict between challengers and authorities will be seen, instead, as a normal part of society and not as an aberration from it. This is why we will begin with the preeminent theorists who saw conflict inscribed in the very structure of society – Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

Marx and Class Conflict

It would not have occurred to the earliest theorists of social movements, Marx and Engels, to ask what makes individuals engage in collective action. Instead, they would have posed the problem as one of the readiness of society's structural development rather than one of individual choice. But although they saw collective action rooted in social structure, Marx and Engels seriously underrated the resources needed to engage in collective action, its cultural dimensions, and the importance of politics. Marx and Engels were classical structuralists who left little room for the concrete mechanisms that draw individuals into collective action. People will engage in collective action, they thought, when their social class comes into fully developed contradiction with its antagonists. In the case of the proletariat, this meant when capitalism forced it into large-scale factories, where it lost ownership of its tools but developed the resources to act collectively.

Among these resources were class consciousness and trade unions. It was the rhythm of socialized production in the factory that would pound the proletariat into a "class for itself" and give rise to the unions that gave it political form. Although there are many more elegant (and more obscure) formulations of this thesis, Marx put it most succinctly in *The Communist Manifesto:*

> The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by their revolutionary combination, due to association. . . . The real fruit of their battle lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers (Tucker, ed. 1978: 481 and 483).

Marx dealt summarily with a problem that has worried activists ever since: why members of a group who "should" revolt when history provides the "objective conditions" for revolt often fail to do so. Concerned with the problem that the workers' movement would not succeed unless a significant proportion of its members cooperated, he developed a theory of "false consciousness," by which he meant that if workers failed to act as "History" dictated, it was because they remained cloaked in a shroud of ignorance woven by their class enemies. The theory was unsatisfactory because no one could say whose consciousness was

[1] For an account of theorists who focus on civil violence as the antithesis of normal social processes, see James Rule's *Theories of Civil Violence* (1988: Chapter 3).

false and whose was real. Marx thought the problem would resolve itself when capitalism's contradictions ripened and the solidarity that came from years of toiling side by side with others like themselves would open workers' eyes to their real interests. Marx, however, died before he could test that thesis.

We now know that as capitalism developed, it produced divisions among the workers and created mechanisms that integrated them into capitalist democracies. Through nationalism and protectionism, workers often allied themselves with capitalists, suggesting that much more than class conflict was necessary to produce collective action on their behalf. A form of consciousness had to be created that would transform economic interests into revolutionary collective action. But who would create this consciousness? Marx had neither a clear concept of leadership nor a concept of working-class culture and, as a result, he seriously underspecified the political conditions that were needed to provide opportunities for revolutionary mobilization (1963b: 175).

Lenin and Resource Mobilization

The first of these problems – leadership – was the major preoccupation of Vladimir Illyich Lenin, Marx's foremost interpreter and the father of the Russian Revolution of November 1917. Learning from the Western European experience that workers on their own will act only on behalf of narrow "trade union interests," he refused to wait for objective conditions to ripen, instead proposing the creation of an elite of professional revolutionaries (1929: 52ff.). Substituting itself for Marx's proletariat, this "vanguard" would act as the self-appointed guardian of workers' "real" (i.e., revolutionary) interests. When that vanguard, in the form of the Russian Bolshevik Party, succeeded in gaining power, it transposed the equation, substituting party interest for that of the working class (and, ultimately, in its Stalinist involution, substituting the will of the leader for that of the party). In 1902, this involution was too far in the future to see. To Lenin, it seemed that organization was the solution to the collective action problem of the working class.

With the virtues of hindsight, we see that Lenin's organizational amendments to Marx's theory were a response to the particular historical conditions of Czarist Russia. In superimposing an intellectual vanguard on the young and unsophisticated Russian working class, he was adapting Marx's theory to the context of a repressive state and to the backward society it ruled – both of which retarded the development of class consciousness and inhibited collective action.[2] Nobody knows what a "mature" working class in a liberal political system would have done had it come to power independently, because after Leninism took hold in Russia, the entire international system was transformed.

[2] Lenin criticized the theory, then current in some socialist circles, that revolutionary leadership must *necessarily* fall mainly upon the shoulders of an extremely small intellectual force. "It is because we [in Russia] are backward." *What Is To Be Done?* (1929: 123–124).

When the theory of the vanguard was applied indiscriminately to the world Communist movement with little regard for social and political opportunities and constraints, the result was a weakening of Western social democracy and, in Italy and Central Europe, of democracy *tout court*. Some of the problems raised by Lenin's theory were addressed by one of his Western successors, Antonio Gramsci, who paid with his life for his mechanical adoption of Lenin's theory by Communist parties in the West.

Gramsci and Cultural Hegemony

When the Russian Revolution of 1917 failed to spread westward, European Marxists such as Gramsci realized that, at least in Western conditions, vanguard forms of organization would not be sufficient to raise a revolution. For Gramsci, it would be necessary to develop the workers' own consciousness, and he therefore conceived of the workers' movement as a "collective intellectual," one of whose prime tasks was to create a working-class culture. This was a subtle but important change from Leninism. Just as he had thought that Italy shared Russia's social conditions, Gramsci at first accepted Lenin's injunction that the revolutionary party had to be a vanguard. But after being clapped into Mussolini's prisons, he revised Lenin's organizational solution with two theorems: first, that a fundamental task of the party was to create a historic bloc of forces around the working class (1971: 168); and, second, that this could occur only if a cadre of "organic intellectuals" were developed from within the working class to complement the "traditional" intellectuals in the party leadership (pp. 6–23).

Both innovations turned out to hinge on a strong belief in the power of culture.[3] Gramsci's solution to the cultural hegemony of the bourgeoisie was to produce a countercultural consensus among workers, give them a capacity for taking autonomous initiatives, and build bridges between them and other social formations. The process would be a long and a slow one, requiring the party to operate within the "trenches and fortifications" of bourgeois society, while proselytizing among nonproletarian groups and learning to deal with cultural institutions such as the Church.

But Gramsci's solution – as seen in the reformist turn taken by Italian Communists, who inherited his mantle after World War II – posed a new dilemma. If the party as a collective intellectual engaged in a long-term dialogue between the working class and bourgeois society, what would prevent the

[3] In 1924, Gramsci wrote;

> The error of the party has been to have accorded priority in an abstract fashion to the problem of organization, which in practice has simply meant creating an apparatus of functionaries who could be depended on for their orthodoxy towards the official view.

See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (1971: LXI) i, where this passage is translated.

cultural power of the latter – what Gramsci called "the common sense of capitalist society" – from transforming the party, rather than vice versa?[4] Without a theory of political mobilization, Gramsci's solution ignored the give-and-take of politics. Gramsci did not provide a guide to how the battle within "the trenches and fortifications" of bourgeois society should be fought (1971: 229–239), nor did he differentiate between polities in which the opportunities and constraints would be strong or weak. However, he did provide a link from materialist Marxism to the constructivist turn in social movement studies of the 1980s and 1990s.

Tilly's Polity Model

Gramsci came of age during and after World War I and during the excitement of the Russian Revolution. It would take the generation that came of age after World War II to transcend the vulgar Marxist idea that politics was merely part of the "superstructure," without autonomy of its own. Charles Tilly's work can stand as one such example. Coming from under the Marxian umbrella of his great teacher, Barrington Moore Jr. (1965), Tilly was equally influenced by British Marxists such as E.P. Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm and by French social historians such as Fernand Braudel. Although Tilly's first book, *The Vendée* (1964), began from the classical Marxian premise that structural variables such as urbanization shape contention, his attention soon shifted to the importance of state structure and to state strategic imperatives (Tilly 1986; 1990). Foremost among these imperatives were the processes of war making, state building, and extraction, which led to "white-hot bargaining" between rulers and ordinary people. Early on, Tilly proposed the static "polity model" of relations among rulers, insiders, and outsiders (1978) that is reproduced in Figure 1.1. This model would guide his work for the next two decades. Later, he would substitute for it the "relational realism" that will be presented later in this book.

Summing Up

Each of these theorists – Marx, Lenin, Gramsci, and Tilly – emphasized a different element of collective action:

- Marx focused on the cleavages of capitalist society that created a mobilization potential without specifying the mechanisms that led particular workers in specific settings to revolt.
- Lenin created the movement organization that was necessary to structure this mobilization potential and prevent its dispersion into narrow trade union

[4] This was a special danger on the periphery of the working-class party, among the middle class and the peasantry. See Stephen Hellman, "The PCI's Alliance Strategy and the Case of the Middle Class" (1975) and Sidney Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy* (1967).

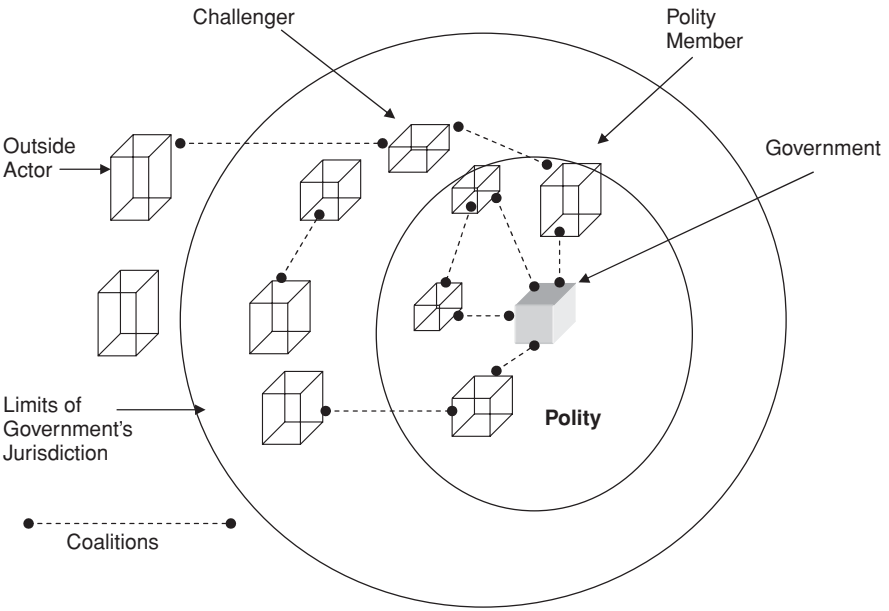

FIGURE 1.1. Tilly's Simple Polity Model. *Source:* Doug McAdam et al., *Dynamics of Contention,* p. 11. Copyright © 2001 Cambridge University Press. Reprinted with permission.

claims but lodged the mechanism of mobilization in an elite of revolutionaries.
- Gramsci centered on the need to build consensus around the party's goals but failed to specify the political conditions in which resource-poor and exploited workers could be expected to mobilize on behalf of their interests.
- The early Tilly focused on those political conditions but in a largely static way.

Contemporary social scientists – mainly sociologists and political scientists, with an assist from economists – beginning in the 1970s, have begun to propose solutions to these problems.

SOCIAL SCIENTISTS, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

Although the parallels are seldom made explicit, these four elements in classical social movement theory are the sources of four recent traditions in the study of collective action and social movements:

- Without sharing Marx's fixation on class, *collective behavior theorists* of the 1950s and early 1960s focused on the grievances responsible for mobilization and saw them stemming from underlying structural strains.

- Without sharing Lenin's belief in an elite vanguard, *resource mobilization theorists* of the 1960s and the 1970s concentrated on leadership and organization.
- Like Gramsci, *framing and collective identity theorists* of the 1980s and 1990s focused on the sources of consensus in a movement.
- From the 1970s on, *political process theorists* followed Tilly's lead in focusing on the political opportunities and constraints that structure contentious politics.

Let us briefly examine how these four schools of thought emerged in recent social science and what they each contribute to our understanding of contentious politics and social movements today.

Grievances and Collective Behavior Theory

Perhaps because they saw social movements from a mainly social-psychological standpoint, American sociologists took a long time to develop a politically connected view of social movements. For many years, in fact, they conceived of movements as the result of "strain," seeing them largely outside the normal institutions of society as part of a construct that came to be called "collective behavior."[5] Collective behavior theory posited that movements were little more than the most well-organized and most self-conscious part of an archipelago of "emergent" phenomena, ranging from fads and rumors, to collective enthusiasms, riots, movements, and revolutions. While political scientists focused on interest groups as "normal" parts of the political process, collective behavior theorists saw movements as exceptions to normal political processes – virtually as part of abnormal psychology.

In some versions of the theory (e.g., see Kornhauser 1959), society itself was seen to be disoriented, and mobilization resulted from the urge to recompose it. This was sometimes linked to Emile Durkheim's theory, in which individuals – unhinged from their traditional roles and identities – join social movements to escape the anomie of a "mass society" (Durkheim 1951; also see Hoffer 1951). Other versions (e.g., Gurr 1971) included no overall vision of breakdown, but individual deprivation was at the center of analysis. The most sophisticated versions of the theory linked collective behavior to a functional view of society in which societal dysfunctions produce different forms of collective behavior – some of which took the form of political movements and interest groups (Smelser 1962; Turner and Killian 1972).

Unlike Marx, who used a mechanistic class theory to predict which collectivities could be expected to mobilize at what stages of capitalism, collective behavior theorists had no preferred social subject. But like Marx, though for

[5] I will not attempt to summarize this school here, but refer the reader to Doug McAdam's synthesis in Chapter 1 of his *The Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency* (1999 [1982]). For a somewhat more sympathetic account of "strain" and "breakdown" theories, see Buechler (2004).

different reasons, they tended to underspecify the mobilization process. And because they started from the assumption that collective behavior was outside the routines of everyday life, few specified its relationship to the political. This may be why few variants of collective behavior theory retained their popularity after the spectacular cycle of protest of the 1960s, which had an intimate relationship to politics (see Chapter 9).

Rational Choice and Resource Mobilization

Both in Western Europe and in the United States, the decade of the 1960s revitalized the study of social movements. All shifts in scholarly focus depend in some way on the historical conditions in which they emerge. Marx's model of class conflict was deeply marked by the emergence of capitalist enterprise in England; the interest of scholars in the collective behavior tradition with alienation and anomie was influenced by the horrors of Stalinism and fascism; in the 1960s, a new generation of scholars, many of them associated with Civil Rights or antiwar movements, saw social movements through a new, more positive lens. For former movement activists and those who studied them, Marx's theory of the proletariat producing a revolution, and the collective behavior theorists' image of "true believers" searching for roots in an atomized society, were difficult to reconcile with the determined young activists – most of them from the middle class – mobilizing in the Civil Rights and anti-Vietnam War movements (Keniston 1968).

The study of contentious politics was also affected by trends in the academy, where economics was emerging as the "master" social science. In the traces of microeconomics, for many scholars the problem for collective action came to be seen not as how classes struggle and states rule, but as how collective action is even *possible* among individuals guided by narrow economic self-interest. The most influential student of this dilemma was the American economist Mancur Olson.

For Olson and those influenced by him (DeNardo 1985), the problem of collective action was a parallel to marketing: how to attract as high a proportion of a group as possible on behalf of its collective good. Only in this way could the group convince its opponents of its own strength. In his classic book, *The Logic of Collective Action* (1965), Olson posited that, in a large group, only its most important members have a sufficient interest in its collective good to take on its leadership – not quite Lenin's "vanguard," but not far from it. The only exception to this rule is seen in small groups in which the individual good and the collective good are closely associated (pp. 43ff.).[6] The larger the group, the more people will prefer to "free ride" on the efforts of the individuals whose

[6] The problem of the size of the group has exercised a great fascination among scholars in both public goods and game theoretic traditions. See John Chamberlin's "Provision of Collective Goods as a Function of Group Size," Russell Hardin's *Collective Action* (1982: Chapter 3), and Gerald Marwell and Pam Oliver's *The Critical Mass in Collective Action: A*

interest in the collective good is strong enough to pursue it.[7] To overcome this problem, Olson posited that would-be leaders must either impose constraints on their members or provide them with "selective incentives" to convince them that participation is worthwhile (p. 51).

Olson's reception into the study of contentious politics was slow and uneven. This is in part because of the irony that, during a decade in which contentious politics was buzzing and blooming, he focused on why it is unlikely (Hirschman 1982). Moreover, Olson seemed to limit the motivations for collective action to material and personal incentives and lacked a theory of participation (Klandermans 2004). But what of the thousands of people who were striking, marching, rioting, and demonstrating on behalf of interests other than their own? Finally, though he named his theory "*collective* action," Olson had little to say beyond the aggregation of individuals by preexisting organizers.

How could Olson's collective action problem be reconciled with the flourishing movements of the 1960s? Two sociologists, John McCarthy and Mayer Zald, proposed an answer that focused on the resources that are increasingly available to people and groups in advanced industrial societies (1973; 1977). McCarthy and Zald agreed with Olson that the collective action problem was real, but argued that the expanded personal resources, professionalization, and external financial support available to movements in such societies provide a solution – professional movement organizations.[8]

While the earlier generation of scholars had focused on the "why" of collective action, McCarthy and Zald's theory – resource mobilization – fastened on the means available to collective actors – on its "how" (Melucci 1988). This emphasis on means was a disappointment to critics looking for deep structural explanations for the origins of movements, but it lent a refreshing concreteness to the study of movements. For McCarthy and Zald, a rational answer to Olson's paradox of the free rider lay in organization. By the early 1980s, their theory of resource mobilization by organizations had become a dominant background paradigm for sociologists studying social movements.

But McCarthy and Zald's emphasis on the "solution" of professional movement organizations seemed to ignore that many of the new movements of the 1960s and 1970s lacked formal organization when they emerged (Evans and Boyte 1992; McAdam 1999 [1982]). And in a decade in which many scholars were beginning to take what came to be called "the cultural turn," many younger scholars found a paradigmatic alternative to organization in

Micro-Social Theory (1993: Chapter 3), which demonstrate theoretically that the size of the group is not the critical variable that Olson thought it was.

[7] Thus, for Olson, General Motors has enough of an interest in the collective good of American auto production to take on the leadership of all domestic car producers, including those that are too small to take action on their own. If enough members of the group take a free ride, not only are the leaders' efforts to no avail – their efforts themselves will induce free riding.

[8] It is no surprise that Zald's dissertation and first book (1970) dealt with the formation, transformation, and politics of the YMCA. For an updated account of resource mobilization, see Edwards and McCarthy (2004).

culture, which began to emerge as a countermodel to resource mobilization (Williams 2004). For these critics, McCarthy and Zald took no account of emotion, focused far too much on formal organization, and left grievances out of their equation. By the 1980s, an alternative model, emphasizing movement decentralization, informal participation, and grassroots democracy, began to arise (Fantasia 1988; Rosenthal and Schwartz 1989).

Cultures of Contention

If the emphasis of the collective behavior paradigm on grievances recalled Marx, and if the focus of resource mobilization on leadership was a sequel to Lenin's organizational theory, this new turn was resonant of Gramsci's interest in culture. Just as the Italian theorist had added a cultural dimension to Lenin's concept of class hegemony, culturalist writers have tried to shift the focus of research on social movements from structural factors to the framing, the discourse, and the emotions in collective action. It is interesting to note that the earliest hint of a paradigm shift came from a Marxist – from E.P. Thompson's enculturation of the concept of class (1966).

Thompson did not want to throw class out the window, but only to substitute for the materialist version of Marxism a focus on class *self*-creation. This took him far from the factory floor – to factors like custom, grain seizures, and consumer mentalities (1971). He invented the culturally enriched concept of "the moral economy" to indicate that people do not revolt in mechanical response to grievances, but only when such grievances are empowered by a sense of injustice. This links Thompson's work to the more theoretically self-conscious "cultural turn" in recent social history (e.g., see Steinberg 1999) and to the "constructivist turn" in American political science (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998).

Thompson had used eighteenth century grain seizures to illustrate a basically Marxian theory, but the idea of a moral economy of protest had more general resonance with the cultural turn that was simultaneously percolating into social movement studies from anthropology, social psychology, and cultural history. For example, his emphasis on meaning was appropriated by an anthropologically gifted political scientist, James Scott (1976), who adapted Thompson's concept of the moral economy to study the reaction of subsistence peasants in Southeast Asia to the strains of commercialization.[9] Scott's work went well beyond the subject of social movements and resonated with the experiences of scholars and activists in the global South (Scott and Kerkvliet, eds. 1986).

Another influence came from social psychology. First from Erving Goffman's concept of framing (1974), and then from Bert Klanderman's concept of "consensus mobilization" (1988; 1997), and from William Gamson's idea

[9] Scott went on to apply his thinking to peasant resistance in general, in his *Weapons of the Weak* (1985), before turning to the culturalist formulation of what he called "hidden transcripts" (1990).

of "ideological packages" (1988), scholars began to examine how individuals construct their participation in movements. From assuming grievances, scholars of social movements now began to focus on how movements embed concrete grievances within emotion-laden "packages" (Gamson 1992), or in "frames" capable of convincing participants that their cause is just and important. While Goffman's work had focused on how individuals frame their actions, David Snow and his collaborators began work on the "framing" of collective action (Snow et al. 1986; Snow 2004).

A third influence came from the constructivist turn in history, with its roots in French social theory. Here the key figure was Michel Foucault, who was concerned with resistance to the overall structure of power in society. "Foucault," in Kate Nash's summary, suggested that "we begin to study power by studying resistance," by which he meant the anti-authority struggles of social movements. In particular, he thinks social movements are engaged in struggles against the imposition of identity. The construction of subjectivity by those who tell us the "truth" of who we are . . . is at the same time a subjection to the power they exercise" (Nash 2000: 3; Foucault 2000). Influenced by Foucault was the work of historical sociologist Marc Steinberg on the eighteenth century transformation of working class ideology and action (1999).

Culturally sensitive work in the 1980s and 1990s also came out of the once resolutely structuralist field of comparative revolution, first in John Foran's *Fragile Resistance: Social Transformation in Iran from 1500 to the Revolution* (1993), then in Mark Selbin's *Modern Latin American Revolutions* (1993), and finally in Jeff Goodwin's *No Other Way Out* (2001). These authors attempted to transcend the dominant structuralist trope that had dominated the study of revolution since Marx, in bold attempts to bring agency centrally into its study.[10]

To some degree, all movements construct meanings (Eyerman and Jamison 1991). But if this is the case, skeptics have asked, why do waves of movements emerge in some periods and not in others, and why are some movements more adept at manipulating cultural symbols than others (Tarrow 1992)? Without answers to these questions, culturalism might prove just as static a meta-narrative as the structuralism its proponents wished to displace. To this dilemma, political scientists and politically attuned sociologists proposed an answer: variations in political structure and in the workings of the political process.

The Political Process Model

Inspired by the rise of contentious politics in the Civil Rights movement, American scholars were first to develop a more political approach to movements, one that eventually centered on several versions of the concept that came

[10] When it came to the Iranian revolution, even a committed structuralist, Theda Skocpol, had to admit the importance of culture. See her essay "Rentier State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution" in her *Social Revolutions in the Modern World* (1994).

to be known as "political opportunity structure."[11] The foundation stone in this tradition was laid by Tilly, in his 1978 classic, *From Mobilization to Revolution*.[12] In this book, Tilly elaborated a set of conditions for mobilization, foremost among which were opportunity/threat to challengers and facilitation/repression by authorities (Chapters 3, 4, 6). Just as important in the United States was the path-breaking work of Richard Cloward and Frances Fox Piven, in *Regulating the Poor* (1971) and *Poor People's Movements* (1977). They questioned the orthodox idea of Marxists such as Eric Hobsbawm that organizational leadership was the key to movement success, and they offered the clearest account of disruption in the literature on protest (1977: Chapter 1), which they considered the key to effective pressure on elites.

Tilly had argued that the development of the national social movement was concomitant, and mutually interdependent, with the rise in consolidated national states (1984b). It followed that movements could be studied only in connection with politics, and that they would vary in their strategy, structure, and success in different kinds of states. This was an insight that students of social revolution, such as Theda Skocpol (1979), were also exploring, and that comparativists in political science were quick to pick up on (Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi et al. 1995; Tarrow 1989).

Given his grounding in European social history, Tilly's model appeared resolutely structural – at least until the 1990s. But Americanists' models were more rooted in the intricacies of the political process. Political scientists such as Michael Lipsky (1968) and Peter Eisinger (1973) focused on American urban politics, with the former linking the urban movements of the 1960s to the use of protest as a political resource, and the latter correlating protest with various measures of local opportunity. In a similar vein, Piven and Cloward turned their attention to the historical relations between welfare and social protest (1993). But it was a sociologist, Doug McAdam, who synthesized these approaches into a fully fledged "political process model" of social movement mobilization by tracing the development of the American Civil Rights movement to political, organizational, and consciousness change (1999 [1982]).

While opportunity/threat and facilitation/repression were parts of the original Tillian synthesis, political process theorists tended to narrow their attention to opportunities and forget about threats. Some scholars – in Eisinger's footsteps – studied how different political structures provide greater or lesser degrees of opportunity to insurgent groups (Amenta et al. 1992; Kitschelt 1986); others looked at how particular movements exploit opportunities provided by institutions (Costain 1992); others examined how the opportunities of a particular movement change over time (Jenkins and Perrow 1977); still

[11] See the excellent survey in Kriesi (2004). The source of these ideas was of course Tilly's foundational work in the 1970s. The main steps in the development of this concept were provided by Eisinger (1973), Kitschelt (1986), Kriesi et al. (1995), McAdam (1999 [1982]), Piven and Cloward (1977), Tarrow (1989), and Amenta (2006).

[12] Tilly's theory of collective action has gone through several permutations since then, some of which will be outlined later in this volume. For an outline of his fundamental contributions to this field, see my review article, "Charles Tilly and the Practice of Contentious Politics" (2008).

others studied entire cycles of protest to understand how triggering of a wave of mobilization affects successor movements (Koopmans 2004; McAdam 1995; Tarrow 1989a).

As these works progressed, lacunae and ambiguities began to appear.[13] For example, political process models were almost always lodged in the democratic West. The perspective began to be systematically applied elsewhere only in the 1990s (Brockett 1991 and 1995; Boudreau 1996; O'Brien and Li 2006; O'Brien, ed. 2008), Schneider 1995). A second question – whether repression has a positive or a negative impact on movement formation – only began to be explored in the 1990s, with a series of works inspired by Donatella della Porta (1995 and 1996; della Porta et al. 1998; della Porta and Fillieule 2004). Third, while some scholars (McAdam 1996; Tarrow 1996b) worked from a limited list of dimensions of opportunity, as more and more aspects of the links between politics and movement formation emerged, the concept tended to balloon (see Gamson and Meyer's critique 1996).

Most important, the political process model was not really about the *process* of contention because most of its practitioners (including this author) failed to specify the mechanisms that connect different elements in the model to one another. Although it was refreshing to move beyond the macrostructural approach of a Marx, a Lenin, or a Gramsci, how contentious actors interacted with each other and with others remained implicit in the model, rather than explicitly specified. Concerted efforts to put the political processes of contention in motion through the specification of their component mechanisms had to await the first decade of this century (see Chapter 9).

Nevertheless, the political process/opportunities approach proposed an answer to the questions that had dogged previous approaches: *Why does contentious politics seem to develop only in particular periods of history? Why does it sometimes produce robust social movements and sometimes flicker out into sectarianism or repression? And why do movements take different forms in different political environments?* It eventually emerged that the political process model cannot claim to explain every aspect of contentious politics or social movements and is best seen not as a theory, but as a framework in which to examine the dynamics of contention. But this is possible only through synthesis with insights from other branches of social movement theory, as I will argue below.

TOWARD A SYNTHESIS

The most forceful argument of this study will be that people engage in contentious politics when patterns of political opportunities and constraints

[13] For a sensitive critique from the inside, see Gamson and Meyer, "Framing Political Opportunity" (1996). For a robust attack on political opportunity theory, see Jeff Goodwin and James Jasper, "Caught in a Winding, Snarling, Vine: A Critique of Political Process Theory" in their edited book, *Rethinking Social Movements* (2004), in which, to their credit, they invited responses from adherents of the approach, including the present author.

change, and then by strategically employing a repertoire of collective action, creating new opportunities, which are used by others in widening cycles of contention. When their struggles revolve around broad cleavages in society; when they bring people together around inherited cultural symbols; and when they can build on – or construct – dense social networks and connective structures, these episodes of contention result in sustained interactions with opponents in social movements. Because each of these four elements is the topic of a chapter in Part II of this book, a brief introduction should suffice here.

The Repertoire of Contention

People do not simply "act collectively." They vote, petition, assemble, strike, march, occupy premises, obstruct traffic, set fires, and attack others with intent to do bodily harm (Taylor and Van Dyke 2004). No less than in the case of religious rituals or civic celebrations, contentious politics is not born out of organizers' heads but is culturally inscribed and socially communicated. The learned conventions of contention are part of a society's public culture.[14] Social movements are repositories of knowledge of particular routines in a society's history, which helps them to overcome the deficits in resources and communication typically found among disorganized people (Kertzer 1988: 104ff.).

Because social movements seldom possess either Olson's selective incentives or constraints over followers, movement leadership has a creative function in selecting forms of collective action that people will respond to. Leaders invent, adapt, and combine various forms of contention to gain support from people who might otherwise stay at home. Economist Albert Hirschman had something like this in mind when he complained that Olson regarded collective action only as a cost – when to many it is a benefit (1982: 82–91). For people whose lives are mired in drudgery and desperation, the offer of an exciting, risky, and possibly beneficial campaign of collective action may be an incentive in itself.

Forms of contention can be common or rare, habitual or unfamiliar, solitary or part of concerted campaigns. They can be linked to themes that are inscribed in the culture or invented on the spot or – more commonly – can blend elements of convention with new frames of meaning. Protest is a resource, according to political scientist Michael Lipsky (1968). Forms of contention are themselves a collective incentive for some people under some circumstances to challenge opponents, drawing on incentives that undergird their networks of trust and solidarity (Tilly 2005b).

Particular groups have a particular history – and memory – of contention. Workers know how to strike because generations of workers struck before

[14] The concept first appears in Tilly's *From Mobilization to Revolution* (1978: Chapter 6), again in his "Speaking Your Mind Without Elections, Surveys or Social Movements" (1983), and then in his *The Contentious French* (1986: Chapter 1). The culmination of his research on the repertoire, published after his death in 2008, is his book *Contentious Performances*.

them; Parisians build barricades because barricades are inscribed in the history of Parisian contention; peasants seize the land carrying the symbols that their fathers and grandfathers used in the past. Political scientists Stuart Hill and Donald Rothchild put it this way:

> Based on past periods of conflict with a particular group(s) or the government, individuals construct a prototype of a protest or riot that describes what to do in particular circumstances as well as explaining a rationale for this action (1992: 192).

These are the issues that will be taken up in Chapter 5.

Networks and Mobilizing Structures

Although it is individuals who decide whether to take up collective action, it is in their face-to-face groups, their social networks, and the connective structures between them that collective action is most often activated and sustained (Diani 2004; Diani and McAdam, eds. 2004). This has been made clear through recent research both in the laboratory[15] and in the real world of movement mobilization. In the collective behavior approach, the tendency was to see isolated, deprived individuals as the main actors in collective action. But by the early 1980s, scholars were finding that it is life within groups that transforms the potential for action into social movements.[16] It is not "groupness" itself that induces mobilization but the normative pressures and solidary incentives that are encoded within networks, and out of which movements emerge and are sustained.

Institutions are particularly economical "host" settings in which movements can germinate. This was particularly true in estate societies such as

[15] Experimental researchers were also learning about the importance of social incentives for cooperation. In an ingenious piece of research, Gamson and his collaborators showed that a supportive group environment was essential for triggering individuals' willingness to speak out against unjust authority – authority that they might well tolerate if they faced it on their own (Gamson et al. 1982). Similarly, when Robyn Dawes and his associates carried out a series of experiments on collective choice, they found that neither egoistic motives nor internalized norms were as powerful in producing collective action as "the parochial one of contributing to one's group of fellow humans" (Dawes et al. 1988: 96). In social dilemma situations, they argue in their article "Not Me or Thee But We" as follows: "people immediately start discussing what 'we' should do, and spend a great deal of time and effort to persuade others in their own group to cooperate (or defect!), even in situations where these others' behavior is irrelevant to the speaker's own payoffs" (p. 94).

[16] For example, McAdam's work on the "Freedom Summer" campaign showed that – far more than their social background or ideologies – it was the social networks in which Freedom Summer applicants were embedded that played a key role in determining who would participate in this campaign and who would stay at home (McAdam: 1986; 1988). At the same time, European scholars such as Hanspeter Kriesi (1988) were finding that movement subcultures were the reservoirs in which collective action took shape. This dovetailed with what sociologist Alberto Melucci (1989; 1996: Chapter 4) was learning about the role of movement networks in defining the collective identity of the movements he studied in Italy.

pre-revolutionary France, where the provincial Parliaments provided institutional spaces where liberal ideas could take hold (Egret 1977). But it is also true in America today. For instance, sociologist Aldon Morris showed that the origins of the Civil Rights movement were bound up with the role of black churches (1984). And political scientist Mary Katzenstein found that the internal structures of the Catholic world were unwitting accomplices in the formation of networks of dissident religious women (1998; also see Levine 1990 and Tarrow 1988). Movements that can appropriate such institutions for their own purposes are more likely to succeed than are those that create new organizational niches (McAdam et al. 2001). The role of organizations and networks in the process of mobilization will be examined in Chapter 6.

Constructing Contention

The coordination of collective action depends on the trust and cooperation that are generated among participants by shared understandings and identities, or, to use a broader category, on the collective action frames that justify, dignify, and animate collective action. Ideology, as David Apter wrote in his classic essay in *Ideology and Discontent*, dignifies discontent, identifies a target for grievances, and forms an umbrella over the discrete grievances of overlapping groups (1964).

But "ideology" is a rather narrow way of describing the mixture of preconceptions, emotions, and interests that move people to action. In recent years, students of social movements have begun to use terms such as *cognitive frames*, *ideological packages*, and *cultural discourses* to describe the shared meanings that inspire people to collective action.[17] Whatever the terminology, rather than regarding ideology as a superimposed intellectual category, or as the automatic result of grievances, these scholars agree in seeing that movements take on passionate "framing work" (e.g., shaping grievances into broader and more resonant claims) (Snow and Benford 1988), stimulating what William Gamson calls "hot cognitions" around them (1992).

Framing relates to the generalization of a grievance and defines the "us" and "them" in a movement's structure of conflict and alliances. By drawing on inherited collective identities and shaping new ones, challengers delimit the boundaries of their prospective constituencies and define their enemies by their real or imagined attributes and evils. They do this through the images they project of both enemies and allies, as much as through the content of their ideological messages (Snow 2004). This requires paying attention to the

[17] Some of the main sources are collected in Bert Klandermans, Hanspeter Kriesi, and Sidney Tarrow, eds., *From Structure to Action* (1988), and in Aldon Morris and Carol Mueller, eds., *Frontiers of Social Movement Research* (1992). For an ingenious use of frame analysis to examine the ideas of ordinary American citizens, see William Gamson's *Talking Politics* (1992b).

"costumes" of collective actors as they appear on the public stage, as well as to the ideological framing of their claims. This we will attempt to do in Chapter 7.

While movement organizers actively engage in framing work, not all framing takes place under their auspices or control. In addition to building on inherited cultural understandings, they compete with the framing that goes on through the media, which transmit messages that movements must attempt to shape and influence (Gamson 2004). As sociologist Todd Gitlin found, much of the communication that helped shape the American New Left in the 1960s passed through the media, in the place of what would have had to be organizational efforts in earlier periods (1980). The new media that have exploded since the 1990s complicate but do not neutralize the influence of the media's framing capacity. Through the Internet, various forms of social networking, and personal media, individuals and groups have gained a capacity to "make the news" that far outstrips the ability of traditional print and visual media to shape collective action, as we will also see in Chapter 7.

State actors are constantly framing issues to gain support for their policies or to contest the meanings placed in public space by movements – indeed, they may take opposing sides in disputes over framing. In the struggle over meanings in which movements are constantly engaged, it is rare that they do not suffer a disadvantage in competition with states, which not only control the means of repression but have at their disposal important instruments for meaning construction. The struggle between states and movements takes place not only in the streets, but in contests over meaning (Melucci 1996; Rochon 1998).

Political Opportunities and Threats

Earlier, I argued that neither Marxist nor culturalist theorists can answer the question of why movements emerge in some periods and not in others, or why some movements prove more adept at manipulating cultural symbols than others. In the political process model sketched above, a key set of mechanisms that help to explain these variations is found in the political opportunities and threats to which movement actors respond.

- By political opportunities, I mean consistent – but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national – sets of clues that encourage people to engage in contentious politics.
- By threats, I mean those factors – repression, but also the capacity of authorities to present a solid front to insurgents – that discourage contention.

No simple formula can predict when contentious politics will emerge, both because the specification of these variables varies in different historical and political circumstances, and because different factors may vary in opposing directions. As a result, the term *political opportunity structure* should be understood not as an invariant model inevitably producing a social movement but as

a set of clues for when contentious politics will emerge and will set in motion a chain of causation that may ultimately lead to sustained interaction with authorities and thence to social movements.

The concept of political opportunity emphasizes resources external to the group. Unlike money or power, these can be taken advantage of by even weak or disorganized challengers but in no way "belong" to them. In Chapter 8, I will argue that contentious politics emerges when ordinary citizens, sometimes encouraged by leaders, perceive opportunities that lower the costs of collective action, reveal potential allies, show where elites and authorities are most vulnerable, and trigger social networks and collective identities into action around common themes. Political opportunities are also shaped by features of the political system that, in turn, shape patterns of interaction between movements and political parties. And at the most general level, as I will argue in Chapter 8, opportunities and constraints are shaped by political regimes.

Similar to Hanspeter Kriesi and his collaborators (1995), I will argue that state structures and political cleavages create relatively stable opportunities (the most obvious of which are forms of access to institutions and the capacity for repression). But it is the changing opportunities and threats and the capacity of actors to take advantage of the former that provide the openings that lead them to engage in contentious politics. Whether contention ripens into social movements depends on how people act collectively; on the mobilization of consensus; and on actors' ability to create or to appropriate mobilizing structures.

To summarize what will have to be shown in greater detail in later chapters: Contentious politics is produced when threats are experienced and opportunities are perceived, when the existence of available allies is demonstrated, and when the vulnerability of opponents is exposed. Contention crystallizes challengers into a social movement when it taps into embedded social networks and connective structures and produces vivid collective action frames and supportive identities able to sustain contention against powerful opponents. By mounting familiar forms of contention, movements become focal points that transform external opportunities into resources. Repertoires of contention, social networks, and cultural frames lower the costs of bringing people into collective action, induce confidence that they are not alone, and give broader meaning to their claims. Together, these four sets of factors trigger the dynamic processes that have made social movements historically central actors in political and social change.

THE DYNAMICS OF MOVEMENT

Part III of the book will turn to the essentially *relational* nature of contentious politics. Unlike the classical political process approach, it will argue that we cannot predict the outcome of any episode of contention by focusing on what a single social movement does at a given moment in time. Challengers must be

seen in relation to those they challenge and to influential allies, third parties, and the forces of order, in the context of the specific type of regime in which they operate (Tilly 2006).

Chapter 9 specifies some of the key mechanisms and processes through which challengers interact with opponents, allies, third parties, and institutions. But these interactive dynamics will be visible only through examination of more or less extended trajectories of contention, to which I turn in Chapter 10. That chapter, which ranges from relatively pacific protest cycles to fully fledged revolutions, will focus on how varied groups of people mobilize at once and on how contention diffuses through campaigns and coalitions. It will also touch on a too-little-studied process of contentious politics: how and why these same people *de*mobilize.

Chapter 11 turns from the dynamics of cycles to the outcomes of cycles of contention. In such general episodes of contention, policy elites respond not to the claims of any individual group or movement, but to the overall degree of turbulence and to the demands made by elites and opinion groups, which only partially correspond to the demands of those they claim to represent. That is why Chapter 11 has the paradoxical title "Struggling to Reform" – because individual movements almost never satisfy their largest ambitions. The important point is that, although movements usually conceive of themselves as outside of and opposed to institutions, acting collectively inserts them into complex political networks, and thus within the reach of the state.

Movements – and particularly waves of movement that are the main catalysts of social change – cannot be detached from national struggles for power. But in the last decade or so, a number of protest campaigns have clearly transcended national boundaries. What do they portend for contentious politics and, more broadly, for the shape of the future international system? Chapter 12 will employ the approach developed in the book to examine complex interactions between insiders and outsiders in the world polity.

The book closes by raising questions about three major issues in the study of contentious politics: First, how do movements interact with institutions, particularly electoral institutions; second, what about the "warring movements" that threaten the peace and stability of ordinary people; and, third, is the world becoming a "movement society," one in which the line between institutional and unruly politics is increasingly erased, or is the threat of transgressive contention producing ever more repressive states?

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