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# Social Movements

SECOND EDITION

EDITED BY

DAVID A. SNOW, SARAH A. SOULE, HANSPETER KRIESI,  
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THE WILEY BLACKWELL COMPANION TO  
SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

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McCAMMON**

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# Contents

Notes on Contributors	ix
Introduction: Mapping and Opening Up the Terrain <i>David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, Hanspeter Kriesi,     and Holly J. McCammon</i>	1
PART 1 FACILITATIVE AND CONSTRAINING CONTEXTS AND CONDITIONS	17
1 The Political Context of Social Movements <i>Doug McAdam and Sidney Tarrow</i>	19
2 The Role of Threat in Collective Action <i>Paul D. Almeida</i>	43
3 The Cultural Context of Social Movements <i>James M. Jasper and Francesca Polletta</i>	63
4 The Resource Context of Social Movements <i>Bob Edwards, John D. McCarthy, and Dane R. Mataic</i>	79
5 The Ecological and Spatial Contexts of Social Movements <i>Yang Zhang and Dingxin Zhao</i>	98
6 Social Movements and Transnational Context: Institutions, Strategies, and Conflicts <i>Clifford Bob</i>	115
7 Social Movements and Mass Media in a Global Context <i>Deana A. Rohlinger and Catherine Corrigan-Brown</i>	131

PART II	SOCIAL MOVEMENT ORGANIZATIONS, FIELDS, AND DYNAMICS	149
8	Networks and Fields <i>Nick Crossley and Mario Diani</i>	151
9	Social Movement Organizations <i>Edward T. Walker and Andrew W. Martin</i>	167
10	Bringing Leadership Back In <i>Marshall Ganz and Elizabeth McKenna</i>	185
11	How Social Movements Interact with Organizations and Fields: Protest, Institutions, and Beyond <i>Fabio Rojas and Brayden G. King</i>	203
12	Infighting and Insurrection <i>Amin Ghaziani and Kelsy Kretschmer</i>	220
13	Diffusion Processes Within and Across Movements <i>Sarah A. Soule and Conny Roggeband</i>	236
14	Coalitions and the Organization of Collective Action <i>Megan E. Brooker and David S. Meyer</i>	252
PART III	SOCIAL MOVEMENT STRATEGIES AND TACTICS	269
15	Tactics and Strategic Action <i>Brian Doherty and Graeme Hayes</i>	271
16	Technology and Social Media <i>Jennifer Earl</i>	289
17	Social Movements and Litigation <i>Steven A. Boutcher and Holly J. McCammon</i>	306
18	Social Movements in Interaction with Political Parties <i>Sven Hutter, Hanspeter Kriesi, and Jasmine Lorenzini</i>	322
19	Nonviolent and Violent Trajectories in Social Movements <i>Kurt Schock and Chares Demetriou</i>	338
20	Art and Social Movements <i>Lilian Mathieu</i>	354
PART IV	MICROSTRUCTURAL AND SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS	369
21	Individual Participation in Street Demonstrations <i>Jacqueline Van Stekelenburg, Bert Klandermans, and Stefaan Walgrave</i>	371
22	The Framing Perspective on Social Movements: Its Conceptual Roots and Architecture <i>David A. Snow, Rens Vliegthart, and Pauline Ketelaars</i>	392



	CONTENTS	vii
23	Emotions in Social Movements <i>Justin Van Ness and Erika Summers-Effler</i>	411
24	Collective Identity in Social Movements: Assessing the Limits of a Theoretical Framework <i>Cristina Flesher Fominaya</i>	429
PART V	CONSEQUENCES AND OUTCOMES	447
25	The Political Institutions, Processes, and Outcomes Movements Seek to Influence <i>Edwin Amenta, Kenneth T. Andrews, and Neal Caren</i>	449
26	Economic Outcomes of Social Movements <i>Marco Giugni and Maria T. Grasso</i>	466
27	The Cultural Outcomes of Social Movements <i>Nella Van Dyke and Verta Taylor</i>	482
28	Biographical Consequences of Activism <i>Florence Passy and Gian-Andrea Monsch</i>	499
PART VI	THEMATIC INTERSECTIONS	515
29	Social Class and Social Movements <i>Barry Eidlin and Jasmine Kerrissey</i>	517
30	Gender and Social Movements <i>Heather McKee Hurwitz and Alison Dahl Crossley</i>	537
31	Race, Ethnicity, and Social Movements <i>Peter B. Owens, Rory McVeigh, and David Cunningham</i>	553
32	Bringing the Study of Religion and Social Movements Together: Toward an Analytically Productive Intersection <i>David A. Snow and Kraig Beyerlein</i>	571
33	Human Rights and Social Movements: From the Boomerang Pattern to a Sandwich Effect <i>Kiyoteru Tsutsui and Jackie Smith</i>	586
34	Globalization and Social Movements <i>Massimiliano Andretta, Donatella della Porta, and Clare Saunders</i>	602
35	Political Extremism and Social Movements <i>Robert Futrell, Pete Simi, and Anna E. Tan</i>	618
36	Nationalism, Nationalist Movements, and Social Movement Theory <i>Hank Johnston</i>	635

37	War, Peace, and Social Movements <i>David S. Meyer and Sidney Tarrow</i>	651
38	Authoritarian Regimes and Social Movements <i>Xi Chen and Dana M. Moss</i>	666
39	Revolution and Social Movements <i>Jack A. Goldstone and Daniel P. Ritter</i>	682
40	Terrorism and Social Movements <i>Colin J. Beck and Eric W. Schoon</i>	698
	Index	714

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# Introduction: Mapping and Opening Up the Terrain

DAVID A. SNOW, SARAH A. SOULE, HANSPETER KRIESI,  
AND HOLLY J. MCCAMMON

Social movements are one of the principal social forms through which collectivities give voice to their grievances and concerns about the rights, welfare, and well-being of themselves and others by engaging in various types of collective action, ranging from peaceful protest demonstrations to acts of political violence, from pamphleteering to revolution, and from mass vigils memorializing deceased constituents to boisterous gatherings clamoring for retribution, all of which dramatize those grievances and concerns and demand that something be done about them. Although there are other more institutionalized and publicly less conspicuous venues in which collectivities can express their grievances and concerns, particularly in democratic societies, social movements have long functioned as an important vehicle for articulating and pressing a collectivity's interests and claims. Indeed, it is arguable that an understanding of many of the most significant developments and changes throughout human history – such as the ascendance and spread of Christianity and Islam, the Reformation, and the French, American, Russian and Chinese Communist revolutions – are partly contingent on an understanding of the workings and influence of social movements, and this is especially so during the past several centuries. In this regard, it is interesting to note that *Time* magazine's centennial issue (December 31, 1999) included Mohandas Gandhi, the inspirational leader of one of the more consequential movements of the past century, among its three major candidates for the person of the century. Why Gandhi?

He stamped his ideas on history, igniting three of the century's great revolutions – against colonialism, racism, violence. His concept of nonviolent resistance liberated one nation and sped the end of colonial empires around the world. His marches and fasts fired the imagination of oppressed people everywhere.

(McGeary 1999: 123)

And “his strategy of nonviolence has spawned generations of spiritual heirs around the world” (*Time* 1999: 127), including Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez, Gloria Steinem, Lech Walesa, Benigno Aquino Jr., and Nelson Mandela – all prominent leaders of a major, consequential social movement in their respective homelands. A decade after the turn of the century, *Time* again focused attention on social movement actors, naming as its 2011 Person of the Year “The PROTESTOR from the Arab Spring to Athens, From Occupy Wall Street to Moscow” (December 6, 2011).

While one might quibble with *Time*’s estimation of Gandhi’s influence, as well as that of the 2011 protestors, the more important point is that some of the major events and figures of the past century, as well as earlier, are bound up with social movements. And that is particularly true today, as social movements and the activities with which they are associated have become an increasingly conspicuous feature of the social landscape. Indeed, rarely does a day go by in which a major daily newspaper does not refer to social movement activity in relation to one or more of the passionately contested issues of our time: abortion, austerity, civil rights, democratization, environmental protection, family values, gender equality, governmental intrusion and overreach, gun control, human rights, healthcare, immigration, income inequality, LGBTQ rights, labor and management conflict, nuclear weapons, populism, policy brutality, religious freedom, terrorism, war, world poverty, and so on. In fact, it is difficult to think of major national or international social issues in which social movements and related collective action events are not involved on one or both sides of the issues. Of course, not all social movements speak directly to, or play a significant role in, major national or international issues, as some are primarily local in terms of the scope and target of their actions. Examples include petitions against the proposed siting of “big box” stores such as Walmart, home-owners protesting the proximate location of a homeless shelter or refugee center, or the expansion of a local hospital, which would increase traffic through the targeted neighborhood. In addition to being local in terms of their constituents and targets, such movements typically go unnoticed beyond the local context because they operate beneath the radar of the national and international media. Nonetheless, such local movement activity probably occurs much more frequently than the large-scale protest events that are more likely to capture the national media’s attention.

Because of such observations and considerations, it might be argued that we live not only in a “movement society” (Meyer and Tarrow 1998; Soule and Earl 2005), but even in a movement world. In the Preface to the reissue of his highly regarded historical account of the people, ideas, and events that shaped the New Left in the 1960s, entitled *Democracy Is in the Streets*, James Miller (1994) ponders the legacy of that period, and concludes that maybe its most enduring contributions were cultural. Perhaps so, but only insofar as the cultural includes models for political participation and action. Why? Because whatever the significant consequences of the 1960s, certainly one of the most important was that the movements of that period pushed open the doors to the streets, arguably wider than for some time, as a major venue for aggrieved citizens to press their claims. And large numbers of citizens have “taken it to the streets” ever since in the US and elsewhere to express their collective views on all kinds of issues, although often at a decreasing rate of increase with variation across types of political engagement and time (see Dalton 2013; Norris 2002; Quaranta 2016; van Deth 2011).<sup>1</sup> For example, in an assessment of forms of political

protest in Western Europe from 1981 to 2009, Quaranta (2016) found that while there has been an expansion of protest in Western Europe, its popularity and diffusion vary by the type of protest, with an increase in the popularity of petitioning, boycotting, and attending demonstrations in contrast to more confrontational forms of protests, such as unofficial strikes and occupations, which have not increased proportionately. Such variation notwithstanding, it is arguable that social movements and the activities they sponsor have become a kind of fifth estate in the world today. If so, then understanding our own societies, as well as the larger social world in which they are embedded, clearly requires some knowledge and understanding of social movements and the activities with which they are associated.

In addition to giving voice and being a conspicuous element in modern society, social movements can also be highly influential, and these impacts can be far-reaching. Not only did the New Left produce a lasting cultural legacy, other movements have done so as well. The women's movement of the 1960s and the 1970s brought profound changes in how women's roles in society were understood (Rosen 2000). The black civil rights movement succeeded in winning not only foundational Supreme Court decisions such as *Brown v. Board of Education*, but the movement spurred the Kennedy administration to initiate steps toward federal legislation addressing racial inequality (Greenberg 2004; Risen 2014). The global environmental movement, a rapidly growing and diverse collection of actors, that simultaneously "reach[es] up to states" and "down to the local communities" to educate the public, monitor environmental degradation, and pressure political leadership, is winning the passage of global pro-environmental treaties and law (Princen and Finger 1994: 11; see also Longhofer, Schofer, Miric, and Frank 2016). Moreover, scholars increasingly examine the biographical impacts of movements. Those participating in movement activism, for instance, experience changes in their worldviews and personal identities, their choices in career and marriage, and their social networks of friends and acquaintances (McAdam 1989). While social movements are certainly not always successful and sometimes the changes they foster are unintended and provoke a backlash, as in the case of the breathtaking movements of the 2011 Arab Spring, their effects can unfold at multiple levels, from the broad political and cultural realms to the everyday lives of movement participants.

Just as social movement activity appears to have become a more ubiquitous social form in the world today, even to the point of becoming a routinized avenue for expressing publicly collective grievances, so too there has been a corresponding proliferation of scholarly research on social movements and related activity throughout much of the world, and particularly within Europe and the US. Taking what are generally regarded as the top four journals in American sociology (*American Sociological Review*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *Social Forces*, and *Social Problems*), for example, there has been an increase in the proportion of collective action and social movement articles published in these journals since the middle of the past century: from 2.23% for the 1950s, to 4.13% for the 1970s, to 9.45% for the 1990s and 8.72% for 2006–2015.<sup>2</sup> Also suggestive of growing scholarly interest in the study of social movements is the relatively large number of edited volumes, published since the early 1990s (e.g. Costain and McFarland 1998; Davenport, Johnston, and Mueller 2005; della Porta, Kriesi, and Rucht 1999; Diani and McAdam 2003; Givans, Roberts, and Soule 2010; Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2001; Jenkins

and Klandermans 1995; Johnston and Klandermans 1995; Larana, Johnston, and Gusfield 1994; Maney et al. 2012; Mansbridge and Morris 2001; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; Meyer and Tarrow 1998; Meyer, Whittier, and Robnett 2002; Morris and Mueller 1992; Reger, Myers, and Einwohner 2008; Smith, Chatfield, and Pagnucco 1997; Stryker, Owens, and White 2000; Van Dyke and McCammon 2010; Van Stekelenburg, Roggeband, and Klandermans 2013). As well, during the past couple of decades scholars have produced a number of social movement texts (Buechler 2000; della Porta and Diani 1999; Garner 1996; Johnston 2014; Meyer 2007; Snow and Soule 2010; Staggenborg 2008; Tarrow 1998), and edited, text-like readers (Buechler and Cylke, Jr. 1997; Darnovsky, Epstein, and Flacks 1995; Goodwin and Jasper 2003; Lyman 1995; McAdam and Snow 2010), as well as a three-volume encyclopedia of social and political movements (Snow, della Porta, Klandermans, and McAdam 2013). The publication of two international journals of research and theory about social movements and related collective actions – *Mobilization* (published in the US) and *Social Movement Studies* (published in the UK) – also points to increasing scholarship in this area.

Clearly there has been a proliferation of research and writing on social movements during the past several decades. Yet, there was no single volume that provided in-depth, synthetic examinations of a comprehensive set of movement-related topics and issues in a fashion that reflected and embodied the growing internationalization of social movement scholarship until the 2004 publication of *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*. A more recent addition to this comprehensive genre of original essays is della Porta and Diani's *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements* (2015), which also opens up the analysis to other fields, such as communication, geography, and history. The current volume is an extensive and expansive revision of our 2004 volume, one that builds further on this growing comprehensive genre of movement scholarship by covering the major processes and issues generally regarded as relevant to understanding the course and character, indeed the dynamics, of social movements, as well as the major intersections between the study of social movements and other sectors and dimensions of social life, such as gender, social class, race and ethnicity, religion, nationalism, war, and terrorism. And, in doing so, it provides broader coverage, and thus is more comprehensive, than other existing edited volumes and texts on social movements. This topical breadth is afforded without sacrificing focus and detail, as each of the contributions to the volume provides an in-depth, state-of-the-art overview of the topics addressed, whether it be facilitative contexts or conditions, strategies and tactics, or a particular set of outcomes. In addition, the volume attempts to open up social movement research to developments in related areas of study. Thus, the last part of the volume is dedicated to "thematic intersections" between social movement research and related fields and opens up the conversation between major social movement agendas and those in related fields. And, finally, in recognition of the growing internationalization of social movement scholarship, the volume was compiled with the additional objective of reflecting this internationalization in terms of both empirical substance and chapter authorship. Our objective with this volume, then, is to provide in-depth, synthetic examinations of a comprehensive set of movement-related topics, issues, and intersections by a blend of a cross-section of established, internationally recognized scholars with a more recent generation of scholars of increasing recognition.

Before outlining how we have organized the contributions that comprise this volume, we seek to establish a conceptualization of social movements that is sufficiently broad so as not to exclude the various and sundry types of social movements while sufficiently bounded to allow us to distinguish movements from other social phenomena that may bear a resemblance to social movements but yet are quite different.

### **Conceptualizing Social Movements<sup>3</sup>**

Definitions of social movements are not hard to come by. They are readily provided in most text-like treatments of the topic (e.g. della Porta and Diani 1999; Snow and Soule 2010; Tarrow 1998; Turner and Killian 1987), in edited volumes of conference proceedings and previously published articles and scholarly papers (e.g. Goodwin and Jasper 2003; McAdam and Snow 2010; Meyer and Tarrow 1998), and in summary, encyclopedia-like essays (e.g. Benford, Gongaware, and Valadez 2000; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1988, Snow and Tan 2015). Although the various definitions of movements may differ in terms of what is emphasized or accented, most are based on three or more of the following axes: collective or joint action; change-oriented goals or claims; some extra- or non-institutional collective action; some degree of organization; and some degree of temporal continuity. Thus, rather than begin with a straightforward conceptualization, we consider first these conceptual axes.

#### **Social movements as a form of collective action**

Social movements are only one of numerous forms of collective action. Other types include much crowd behavior, as when sports and rock fans roar and applaud in unison; some riot behavior, as when looting rioters focus on some stores or products rather than others; some interest group behavior, as when the National Rifle Association mobilizes large numbers of its adherents to write or phone their respective congressional representatives; some “gang” behavior, as when gang members work the streets together; and large-scale revolutions. Since these are only a few examples of the array of behaviors that fall under the collective action umbrella, it is useful to clarify the character of social movements as a type of collective action.

At its most elementary level, collective action consists of any goal-directed activity engaged in jointly by two or more individuals. It entails the pursuit of a common objective through joint action – that is people working together in some fashion for a variety of reasons, often including the belief that doing so enhances the prospect of achieving the objective. Since collective action so defined obviously includes a large number of human behaviors, it is useful to differentiate those collective actions that are social movements from other forms of collective action. Social movements entail actors (and their actions) that collectively challenge authorities, sometimes in an attempt to bring about social change, but in other circumstances to prevent such change from occurring. Social movements often use non-institutionalized means of action, such as appropriating and using public and quasi-public places for purposes

other than for which they were designed or intended. But they also sometimes agitate inside institutional settings, including inside the government (Banaszak 2010), schools (McCammon et al. 2017), religious institutions (Katzenstein 1998), and corporations (Soule 2009), challenging and pressuring authorities in these settings. Social movement actors, as David Meyer explains, contest a variety of norms and practices, including law and policy, cultural beliefs and values, and everyday and institutional practices (2007: 10). As Sidney Tarrow notes, collective movement action “takes many forms – brief or sustained, institutionalized or disruptive, humdrum or dramatic” (1998: 3).

#### *Social movements and collective behavior*

Parsing collective action into social movements and other forms of collective activity still leaves numerous collective actions within the latter category. Traditionally, most of these non-movement collective actions have been treated as varieties of collective behavior. Broadly conceived, collective behavior refers to group action that tends to be more spontaneous and often emotionally driven, as might occur in mass or diffuse phenomena, such as panics, fads, crazes, and sometimes riots.<sup>4</sup> Thus, social movements differ significantly from most other variants of collective action in that, as we discuss below, social movements are coordinated and planned collective action typically involving articulated grievances and claims.

#### *Social movements and interest groups*

Just as social movements overlap to some degree with some forms of collective action, they also overlap with interest groups, which also comprise another set of collective actors that are often equated with social movements. Clearly interest groups, such as Planned Parenthood and the Christian Coalition, and some social movements, such as the pro-choice and pro-life movements, are quite similar in terms of the interests and objectives they share with respect to some aspect of social life. Yet there are also noteworthy differences. First, interest groups are generally defined in relation to the government or polity (Walker 1991), whereas the relevance and interests of social movements extend well beyond the polity to other institutional spheres and authorities. Second, even when social movements are directly oriented to the polity or state, their standing is different. Interest groups are generally embedded within the political arena, as most are regarded as legitimate actors within it, although, depending on the group holding political power, interest groups once considered as legitimate political players may now be deemed outsiders. Social movements, on the other hand, are typically outside of the polity, or overlap with it in a precarious fashion, because they seldom have the same standing or degree of access to or recognition among political authorities. A third difference follows: interest groups pursue their collective objectives mainly through institutionalized means, such as lobbying and soliciting campaign contributions, whereas social movements pursue their collective ends mainly via the use of non-institutional means, such as conducting marches, boycotts, and sit-ins.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Connections and overlaps*

To note the distinction among social movements, other varieties of collective behavior, and interest groups is not to assert that they do not overlap at times.

The relationship between non-conventional crowd activity and social movements is illustrative. Although some crowds arise spontaneously and dissipate just as quickly, others are the result of prior planning, organization, and negotiation. In such cases, they often are sponsored and organized by a social movement, and constitute part of its tactical repertoire for dramatizing its grievances and pressing its claims. When this occurs, which is probably the dominant pattern for most protest crowds or demonstrations, neither the crowd phenomena nor the movement can be thoroughly understood without understanding the relationship between them. Thus, while social movements can be distinguished conceptually from other forms of collective action and collective behavior, social movements and some crowd phenomena often are intimately linked. Social movements and interest groups can be closely connected too, as when they form an alliance to press their joint interests together. Moreover, as social movements develop over time, they often become more and more institutionalized, with some of them evolving (at least partially) into interest groups or even political parties.

### **Social movements as challengers to or defenders of existing authority**

There is generalized acknowledgment that social movements are in the business of seeking or halting change, but there is a lack of consensus as to the locus and level of changes sought. Must it be the political institutional level? That is, must the changes or objectives sought be in terms of seeking concessions from or altering political institutions? What about changes at the individual or personal level? Do other kinds of changes count, such as those associated with so-called self-help groups, or animal rights, or life styles? And to what extent should the amount or degree of change be considered in conceptualizing movements?

Whatever the components of various definitions of social movements, all emphasize that movements are in the business of promoting or resisting change with respect to some aspect of the world in which we live. Indeed, fostering or halting change is the *raison d'être* for all social movements. But scholars are not of one mind when it comes to specifying the character of the change sought. Some leave the question open-ended, stating simply that social movements are "collective attempts to promote or resist change in a society or group" (Benford, Gongaware, and Valadez 2000; Turner and Killian 1987: 223), while others narrow the range of targets of change primarily to those within the political arena (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001).

Neither the open-ended nor manifestly political conceptual strategies are entirely satisfactory. The open-ended one is too ambiguous, while the emphasis on "collective political struggle" is too institutionally narrow, excluding challenges rooted in other institutional and socio-cultural contexts.<sup>6</sup> Thus, in order to have an understanding of social movements that is both more inclusive in terms of what gets counted as social movement activity, and yet more tightly anchored institutionally and culturally, we argue that movements be considered as challengers to, or defenders of, existing *institutional authority* – whether it is located in the political, corporate, religious, or educational realm – or patterns of *cultural authority*, such as systems of beliefs or practices reflective of those beliefs.<sup>7</sup>

### Social movements as organized activity

Earlier it was noted that social movements, as a form of collective action, involve joint action in pursuit of a common objective. Joint action of any kind implies some degree of coordination, and thus organization. Scholars of social movements have long understood the relevance of organization to understanding the course and character of movement activity, but they have rarely agreed about the forms, functions, and consequences of organization with respect to social movements. The seeds of this debate were sown in the early twentieth century – with the juxtaposition of the revolutionary Lenin's (1929) call for organization as the key to stimulating working-class consciousness to Luxemburg's (Waters 1970) and Michels' (1962 [1911]) critique of formal party organization as retarding rather than promoting progressive politics and democracy – and flowered full bloom in the latter quarter of the century. Carrying Luxemburg's banner, for example, Piven and Cloward (1977) have argued that too much emphasis on organization was antithetical to effective mobilization, particularly among the poor. In contrast, McCarthy and Zald (1977), among others (Gamson 1990; Lofland 1996), argued that social movement organizations (SMOs) were fundamental not only for assembling and deploying the resources necessary for effectively mounting movement campaigns, but they were also key to the realization of a movement's objectives. Thus, SMOs were proffered as the orienting, focal unit of analysis for understanding the operation of social movements (Lofland 1996; McCarthy and Zald 1977). But, again, not all scholars agreed. This time it was not because of fear of the constraining effects of formal organization, but because movements, according to della Porta and Diani (1999: 16) "are not organizations, not even of a peculiar kind," but "networks of interaction between different actors which may either include formal organizations or not, depending on shifting circumstances."

Given these contrasting arguments regarding the relationship between organization and social movements, it seems reasonable to ask whether one is more accurate than another, or if we must choose one over another? The answer to both questions is "no!" There is absolutely no question about the fact that social movement activity is organized in some fashion or another (Snow and Soule 2010). Clearly there are different forms of organization (e.g. single SMO vs. multiple, networked SMOs) and degrees of organization (e.g. tightly coupled vs. loosely coupled), and clearly there are differences in the consequences of different forms and degrees of organization. But to note such differences is not grounds for dismissing the significance of organization to social movements.

Tarrow (1998: 123–124) helps clarify these issues when he distinguishes between social movements as formal organizations, the organization of collective action, and social movements as connective structures or networks. Conceptually, the issue concerns neither the form nor consequences of organizations, but the fact that the existence of social movement activity implies some degree of organization. To illustrate, consider the civil rights movement of the 1960s, and some of its leaders, such as Martin Luther King and Stokely Carmichael, as well as various organizational representatives, such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Indeed, it is difficult to



comprehend the civil rights movement in the absence of the leaders and organizations associated with it. The same can be said also about many other social movements. Take, for example, the student-led pro-democracy movement in Beijing (Zhou 2001). Not only were the actions of demonstrators coordinated, but there were various organizing groups.

Thus, in many movements we see the interests and objectives of a particular constituency being represented and promoted by one or more individuals associated with one or more organizations now routinely referred to in the literature as SMOs. While the organizations associated with these movements may vary in a variety of ways, the point still remains that much of the activity, including the relations between participating organizations, was itself organized. It is because of such observations that a semblance of organization needs to be included as a component of the conceptualization of social movements, but without specifying the character and degree of organization for any specific movement.

### **Social movements as existing with some temporal continuity**

The final axis of conceptualization concerns the extent to which social movements operate with some degree of temporal continuity. Some scholars have suggested that social movements are “episodic” in the sense of not being regularly scheduled events (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001: 5), which is certainly true inasmuch as social movements are not routinely on the community or national calendar. To be sure, social movement events and activities get placed on the community calendar from time to time, but such is the result of application and/or negotiation processes with officials rather than routine calendarization of a movement’s activities.

Yet, to note that movements are temporally episodic is not to suggest that they are generally fly-by-night fads that are literally here today and gone tomorrow. Clearly there is considerable variability in their careers or life course, as some movements do indeed last for a very short time, as with most neighborhood, NIMBY oppositions; while others endure for decades, as with Heaven’s Gate “cult” that was first observed in the US in the 1970s (Balch 1995) and the Soka Gakki/Nichiren Shoshu Buddhist movement that was first introduced into the USA in the early 1960s (Snow 1993); and still others persist across generations, alternating between periods of heightened activism and dormancy, as with the Women’s movement (Rupp and Taylor 1987). And for many, and perhaps most movements, they are clustered temporally within “cycles of protest” that wax and wane historically (Tarrow 1998). So clearly there is striking temporal variability in the life span of social movements.

Yet, the kinds of changes movements pursue, whatever their degree or level, typically require some measure of sustained, organized activity. Continuity, like organization, is a matter of degree, of course. But it is difficult to imagine any movement making much progress in pursuing its objectives without fairly persistent, almost nagging, collective action. Accordingly, some degree of sustained collective action, and thus temporal continuity, are essential characteristics of social movements.

## A Conceptualization of Social Movements

Having explored the various conceptual axes pertaining to social movements, we are now in position to suggest a working conceptualization of social movements based on the various elements highlighted. Accordingly, social movements can be thought of as:

Collectivities acting with some degree of organization and continuity outside of institutional or organizational channels for the purpose of challenging or defending extant authority, whether it is institutionally or culturally based, in the group, organization, society, culture, or world order of which they are a part.

The major advantage of this conceptualization over other definitions, and particularly those that link social movements to the polity or government, is that it is more inclusive, thus broadening what gets counted and analyzed as social movements. Thus, from this vantage point, a wide range of collective actions constitute social movements, including the following: the Spring 1989 pro-democracy student protests in China; the broader pro-democracy stirrings in Eastern Europe that contributed to fall of Communist regimes throughout the region in the late 1980s; the wave of world-wide anti-war protests associated with the US-UK/Iraq War (variously framed as an “invasion” and a “liberation”) of 2003; the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings; the Occupy movement in the US and the corresponding Indignados and anti-austerity movements in Europe; and the current rise of right-wing and populist enthusiasm throughout sectors of the Western world; local, NIMBY movements; the rebellion among parishioners to the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church; and even erstwhile cultish, escapist movements such as Heaven’s Gate and the followers of Jim Jones.<sup>8</sup> In some fashion or another, each of these movements constituted challenges to institutional, organizational or cultural authority, or systems of authority.

## Structure of the Volume

Social movements, thus conceptualized, can be examined in terms of various contextual factors, dimensions, and processes from a variety of overlapping perspectives via a number of methods. Most edited volumes on movements are typically organized in terms of a few focal contextual factors, dimensions and/or processes. This volume is arranged in terms of these considerations as well, but consistent with our previously mentioned objective of compiling a comprehensive set of detailed, synthetic discussions of the range of factors associated with the dynamics of social movements, we have organized the volume in terms of a broader array of contextual factors, dimensions, and processes than is customary as well as considering the intersectional connections between the study of social movements and a host of other dimensions of social life.

*Contextual factors* reference the broader structural and cultural conditions that facilitate and constrain the emergence and operation of social movements. Metaphorically, contextual conditions constitute the soil in which movements grow

or languish. Part I of the volume consists of seven chapters that focus on and elaborate the relevance of a variety of contextual factors to the course and character of social movements. These include the political context, the role of threat, and the cultural, resource, ecological, transnational, and media contexts from which movements spring or in which they operate.

*Dimensions* encompass characteristic aspects of social movements, such as organizational forms, organizational fields, leadership, tactical repertoires, collective action frames, emotion, collective identity, and consequences; whereas *processes* encompass the ways in which dimensions evolve and change temporally over the course of a movement's operation, such as participant mobilization, tactical innovation, diffusion, and framing. Parts II, III, IV, and V of the volume examine a broad range of movement-relevant dimensions and processes. Part II consists of seven chapters that dissect and elaborate various meso- or organizational-level dimensions and processes that together constitute the dynamic field of action in which movements operate. Included here are chapters on social networks and fields, social movement organizations, leadership, interactions between movements and organizations, dissent and insurrection within and between movements, diffusion processes, and coalitions. Part III includes six chapters that cast light on various aspects of movement strategies and tactics, including chapters on tactics and strategic action, the uses of technology and social media, legal tactics, violence vs. non-violence, and the uses and functions of art by and within movements. Part IV includes four chapters that illuminate participation and its key interpretative and social psychological dimensions and processes. It should be understood that the dimensions and processes examined in this section – such as framing, emotions, and collective identity – operate in conjunction with the meso-organizational level factors considered in Part III, but are separated for analytical purposes because of their interactive and social psychological grounding.

In Part V, attention is turned to the outcome dimension or aspect of social movements. Here there are two guiding questions: What are the consequences of social movements? And in what ways or domains do they make a difference? The four chapters in this section provide different answers to these questions by focusing on four different sets or domains of consequences: political, economic, cultural, and biographic or personal.

The final section of the volume, Part VI, is organized in terms of important thematic intersections between social movements and major, generic social categories (social class, gender, race and ethnicity, and religion), salient global processes or trends (globalization, nationalism, political extremism), and pressing events or issues (human rights, authoritarian regimes, war, revolution, and terrorism). The 12 chapters included in this section provide focused, synthetic discussions of the intersection between scholarly research on movements and each of the above-listed categories, processes, and events or issues.

Rarely is a volume that seeks comprehensive coverage of a field of study completely successful in covering all relevant phenomena or issues variously referenced in discussions of the field. This volume is no different. We had planned to have a chapter on the intersection of social movements and environmental issues and hazards, as well as one on populism, but the prospective authors of these chapters were unable to complete them, so we set sail without them. Additionally, we considered a section

on the various methodologies used in studying social movements, but space limitations forced us to forego that consideration in favor of retaining the breadth and depth of the initial set of chapters solicited. Better, we thought, to provide a comprehensive discussion of the array of factors relevant to the operation and dynamics of social movements which may, in turn, provide a basis for evaluating aspects of current synthetic efforts and perhaps contribute to the development of further synthesis.

These omissions notwithstanding, it is our hope that by providing an expanded compilation of original, state-of-the-art essays on a comprehensive set of movement-related contexts, dimensions, processes, and intersections, that this volume will prove to be a useful companion to those interested in social movements in general and, more particularly, in the array of factors relevant to understanding their emergence, dynamics, consequences, and intersections.

### Notes

- 1 We use “the streets” both literally and metaphorically: literally as the site or social space in which much social protest occurs, and metaphorically as a cover term for the array of movement-related tactical actions, many of which now extend beyond the streets. The doors to the street as a literal site for protest had been partially opened well before the 1960s, at least a century or so earlier as Charles Tilly emphasized in his numerous works elaborating his seminal and historically grounded concept of “repertoires of contention” (e.g. Tilly 1986, 1995. See also Tarrow 1998, especially Chapters 2 and 6). Thus, our point is not that the streets constituted a new space for protest, but that the 1960s appear to have provided a template or model for collective action that would be adopted by citizens from all walks of life associated with all kinds of causes, as our foregoing examples suggest.
- 2 We wish to acknowledge the assistance of Catherine Corrigan-Brown and Minyoung Moon, who conducted the analyses from which these data are derived.
- 3 Portions of this section are drawn from Snow and McAdam’s Introduction to their edited volume consisting of previously published work on social movements (McAdam and Snow 2010: 1–8). This section is also influenced by the conceptual efforts of McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001), Tarrow (1998), Snow and Soule (2010), and Turner and Killian (1972, 1987). The reader familiar with these works will note that the way in which our conceptualization differs from the conceptualizations provided by these works is more nuanced than discordant.
- 4 For an examination of collective behavior broadly construed, see Turner and Killian (1972, 1987). For an incisive critical examination of the literature on crowds, as well as of the utility of the crowd concept, see McPhail (1991) and Snow and Owens (2013), and for discussion of the collective behavior/collective action intersect, see Oliver (2013).
- 5 Burstein (1998, 1999) has questioned the analytic utility of distinguishing between interest groups and social movements, arguing that both concepts should be abandoned in favor of “interest organizations.”
- 6 It is both interesting and important to note that McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly would appear to agree with this charge, as they soften their initial conceptualization by suggesting that “contention involving non-state actors” is not beyond the scope of their approach so long as “at least one member and one challenger [are] actively engaged in contestation over the shape of a given organizational or institutional field” (2001: 342–343).

- 7 The rationale for expanding the conceptualization of social movements in this fashion is elaborated in Snow (2004).
- 8 Some students of social movements do not consider escapist or other-worldly cults or sects and communes as social movements per se, but a strong case can be made that they constitute significant challenges, albeit often indirect, to their encompassing cultural and/or political systems. Indeed, we would argue, in the language of Hirschman (1970), that “exit” may sometimes not only constitute a form of “voice,” but may even speak louder and be more threatening than the voices associated with more conventional challenges (see Snow 2004; Snow and Soule 2010) for an elaboration of this argument).

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# Part I

## Facilitative and Constraining Contexts and Conditions



# 1

## The Political Context of Social Movements

DOUG McADAM AND SIDNEY TARROW

### Introduction

Social movements are an inherently complex, multifaceted set of phenomena, permitting any number of viable analytic perspectives. The first modern perspective on movements was psychological (Adorno et al. 1950; Hoffer 1951; Kornhauser 1959; Le Bon 1960; Smelser 1962). But the emergence and consolidation of a distinct field of social movement studies after the 1960s brought with it the development of analytic frameworks that emphasized the organizational (McCarthy and Zald 1973, 1977), economic (McAdam 1982; Paige 1975; Piven and Cloward 1977; Schwartz 1976), cultural (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994; Melucci 1985; Snow et al. 1986; Snow and Benford 1988), demographic (Goldstone 1991), and network (Diani 1995; Diani and McAdam 2003; Gould 1991, 1993, 1995; McAdam 1986; McAdam and Paulsen 1993; Snow, Zurcher, and Eckland-Olson 1980) dimensions of social movements.

In the 1950s and the 1960s, scholars of contentious politics took the relations between social movements and their social and economic contexts seriously: In his classic, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1966), E.P. Thompson charted how industrialization shaped the future class consciousness and forms of collective action of English workers; Eric Hobsbawm and George Rudé, in *Captain Swing* (1975), showed how machine-breaking was a response to technological innovation; and in *The Vendée* (1964), Charles Tilly found that the urbanization in Western France produced a secular middle class that found just what it needed in the French Revolution. Politics, for these early specialists, was part of the transmission belt from socio-economic structure to movements.

The first hints of a more political contextual framework for understanding and analyzing movements can be glimpsed in the work of two political scientists writing in the early 1970s. Michael Lipsky (1970: 14) urged scholars to be skeptical of system characterizations presumably true for all times and places. Lipsky argued

that the ebb and flow of movement activity was responsive to changes that left institutional authorities either vulnerable or receptive to the demands of particular challengers. Three years later, another political scientist, Peter Eisinger (1973: 11) deployed the concept of *political opportunity structure* to help account for variation in riot behavior in American cities. But it would remain for a pair of sociologists to translate the central insights of Lipsky and Eisinger into a more systematic analytic framework emphasizing the reciprocal relationship between social movements and systems of institutionalized politics.

In 1978, Tilly elaborated on these conceptual beginnings by devoting a full chapter of his landmark book, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, to the important facilitating effect of “political opportunity” in emergent collective action. Four years later the key premise underlying the work of Lipsky, Eisinger, and Tilly was incorporated as one of the central tenets of a new *political process* model of social movements (McAdam 1982). Like the other early proponents of the general perspective, both Tilly and McAdam argued that the timing and ultimate fate of movements were powerfully shaped by the variable opportunities afforded challengers by changes in the institutional structure of political systems and shifting policy preferences and alliances of established “polity members” (Gamson 1990). Soon after, three political scientists added a cross-sectional specification to the temporal changes in opportunity structure: Kitschelt (1986) compared “new social movements” in four democracies, according to the strength or weakness of the state; Kriesi et al. (1995), working in four European democracies, and Tarrow (1989), working on “cycles of protest,” took the political opportunity perspective to Europe.

Since then, countless movement analysts have contributed to the ongoing elaboration of the general political process framework. So thoroughgoing has this elaboration been that we cannot hope to summarize all the extensions and nuances now associated with the perspective. In our structure for the chapter, however, we have tried to accommodate at least some of the more recent and, in our view, important critiques and “friendly amendments” that continue to make the analysis of the political context of movements a vital and central component of the overall field of study. More specifically, the chapter is organized into three main sections. The first deals with the ways in which the more *enduring* features of institutionalized politics help us understand the different fate of the same movements cross-nationally or cross-sectionally within the same state. The second section deals with how the *variable and changing* features of institutionalized political systems influence the emergence and subsequent ebb and flow of movement activity. While these two analytic agendas are the oldest in the political process tradition and continue to structure much of the work on political context, they hardly exhaust all the work that has defined the framework over the years. We will bring the chapter to a close with a section devoted to what we see as: (1) the most important lines of criticism; and (2) theoretical extensions currently enriching the perspective.

### **Enduring Opportunities and Their Effects on Contention**

The underlying assumption of this section is that *stable* political contexts – both within and across regimes – condition contentious politics. This is not to assume that the internal properties of movements – i.e., their organizations, resources, composition,

and demands – or characteristics of the individuals within them are unimportant; only that these properties, which are examined in other contributions to this volume, are channeled through political contexts that shape the directions they take and the relative disposition of actors to follow one or another route to collective action.

There is a general tendency – especially among critics – to characterize the political process model as if political opportunities automatically lead to movement emergence or success. While there may be applications of the model that embrace this stark a view, in McAdam's (1982) original formulation, favorable opportunities were just one of three factors that condition the emergence and impact of a movement. It is the confluence of political opportunities, indigenous organizational capacity, and the emergence of an oppositional consciousness (or "cognitive liberation") that shape the rise of a movement and its prospects for success. And of these, the third was seen as the real catalyst to emergent mobilization. To quote McAdam:

Expanding political opportunities and indigenous organization do not, in any simple sense, produce a social movement ... Together they only offer insurgents a certain "structural potential" for collective political action. Mediating between opportunity and action are people and the subjective meanings they attach to their situation.

(1982: 48)

Moreover, consistent with the focus on effective tactics, McAdam's stress on the crucial role of "tactical innovation" in shaping the pace and impact of the civil rights struggle further reinforces the initial formulation of the political process model. We will turn to the "repertoire of contention" below; here it is sufficient to point out that the ultimate impact of a movement depends on the ongoing interaction of the regime context with the specific goals and strategic decisions of challengers and incumbents alike. We see five properties of a regime that help shape perceptions of political opportunities/threats, and a sixth that we will elaborate in the second section: (1) the multiplicity of independent centers of power within the regime; (2) its openness to new actors and movements; (3) the instability of current political alignments; (4) the availability of influential allies or supporters; (5) the extent to which the regime suppresses or facilitates collective claims; and (6) changes in these properties.

*Multiple centers of power* provide challengers with the chance to "venue shop" for the most welcoming part of the regime; the regime's *openness to new actors* enables new groups to make claims on elites; *stable alignments* generally mean that many political actors have no potential allies in power, the *availability of influential allies or supporters* strengthens movements outside the gates of the polity; and *regime suppression or facilitation* discourages or encourages the emergence of movements. Threats vary in different opportunity structures, and over time, as we will show in the second section. Most people who mobilize do so to combat threats and risks, but also to take advantage of enduring opportunities (Goldstone and Tilly 2001).

Movements do not mobilize against "objective" threats or take advantage of "objective" opportunities. Threats and opportunities pass through a process of *social construction and attribution*. "No opportunity, however objectively open, will invite mobilization unless it is a) visible to potential challengers, and b) perceived as an opportunity. The same holds for threats..." (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001: 43). "Attribution of opportunity or threat is an activating mechanism responsible in part for the mobilization of previously inert populations" (McAdam et al. 2001).

The perception of opportunities where threats are objectively strong can give movements surprising successes, or expose them to risks they fail to perceive. An example of the first phenomenon was the revolution against Communist rule in East-Central Europe, when the real breakthrough was not the objective collapse of Communism but the attribution of opportunity across the region, when activists saw that the “early riser” – Poland – was able to challenge state power (Lohmann 1993); an example of the second was when, in the Middle East, activists in country after country attempted to follow the successful example of the Tunisian “Arab Spring,” but eventually succumbed to repression, as in Egypt (Ketchley 2017).

Scholars have identified a number of enduring factors that converge to produce different combinations of opportunity and threat. One set of factors focuses on the strength of the state and its degree of centralization or dispersion; a second deals with states’ prevailing strategies toward challengers and the opportunities it affords them for contention within the system; and a third relates to the choice of contentious performances – how different aspects of a regime affect the forms of collective action that movements employ, especially their practices of repression. We summarize these perspectives in turn.

### State strength or dispersion

In its most common form, the state strength argument reasons that centralized states which have effective policy instruments at their command attract collective actors to contest the highest reaches of the state. In contrast, because weak states allow criticism and invite participation, they can deal with most challengers through the institutional political process at every level of the state (Lipsky and Olson 1976). A corollary is that movement actors will gravitate to the sector or level of the state that is most susceptible to their claims (Szymanski 2003).

Different political systems vary in how they process even similar movements. For example, when Kriesi and his collaborators studied “new social movements” in four European states in the 1990s, they found differences in levels of mobilization that corresponded to the strength of the state. Switzerland, which they coded as a “weak” state, had a high level of mobilization and a low level of confrontation; at the other extreme, France, which they coded as a strong state, had a lower level of routine mobilization and a higher level of confrontational protest (Kriesi et al. 1995: 49). The Netherlands and Germany were found to be somewhere in the middle empirically.

Most episodes of contention begin locally, but in systems in which local governments lack autonomy, they gravitate to the summit through processes of scale shift (McAdam and Tarrow 2005). In the mid to late-1960s, student unrest in France gravitated quickly to the national level. In contrast, student protests in the United States remained lodged at the campus level. This meant that while the French student movement eventually attacked the entire system, leading to the dramatic “Events of May” (Touraine 1971), American students targeted university administrators and conservative professors and were unable to form a united student movement until the Vietnam War provided them with a unifying theme.

Opportunities for protest are also structured by regional political cultures and institutions. In his comparison of northern and southern Italy, Tarrow (1967) found that popular movements were channeled into mass parties in the industrial North,

while movements remained inchoate and potentially more violent in the South. In the United States, regional political cultures continued to shape contention even after the end of the Civil War. Although there was racism in both regions, it was only in the South that racial laws shaped party politics, violence, and community into a “Jim Crow” system that was not effectively challenged until the post-World War II period (McAdam 1999).

Federalism also shapes contention: As Anne-Marie Syzmanski writes of the American temperance movement, the existence of different state systems allowed the movement to gain leverage at the state level when it was impossible to gain traction in Washington (Szymanski 2003). This channeled the movement to the state level until it was possible – with the passage of the 18th Amendment – to ban alcohol nationally. American federalism segments contention into local, state, and national arenas, where it can be processed, pacified, and resolved through compromise. But not all federal institutions channel contention in peaceful ways; federal systems provide ambitious leaders with institutional resources that they can use to develop independent power bases. For example, it was only in the three federal systems of the Communist world—Czechoslovakia, the USSR, and Yugoslavia – that the downfall of communism led to state breakup and, in the case of Yugoslavia, to civil war (Bunce 1999).

### Prevailing state strategies

Researchers have found that different states have different prevailing strategies toward movements. Authoritarian states tend to regard all forms of protest as threats to the regime, while liberal-democratic states tolerate a broad range of peaceful contention and, in fact, often modify their policies in response to protest. But even in authoritarian states, there are important variations, as Chapter 38 in this volume shows. With the fall of the Communist bloc in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, democracy seemed for a time to be “the only game in town.” Even authoritarian leaders played the game of electoral competition. This gave rise to a historically new form of governance – “hybrid authoritarianism” – in which strong leaders manipulated electoral machinery to legitimate their rule (Levitsky and Way 2002).

### Regimes, repertoires, and contention

We have seen how different types of states and their prevailing strategies condition movement perceptions of opportunities and threats. But once the decision to engage in collective action is made, how do characteristics of the state affect the types of collective action that groups choose to engage in? Before addressing this question, we need to introduce another key concept – *the repertoire of contention* – and two sub-types of that concept. We define contentious repertoires as arrays of performances that are currently known and available to some set of actors. Contained contention takes place within a regime, using its established institutional routines; transgressive contention challenges those routines and threatens the primacy of those they protect (Tilly and Tarrow 2015: 49, 62). In liberal-democratic regimes, we find a great deal of contention, but most of it is contained within institutions that are designed to structure and pacify conflict. Electoral and legislative institutions are the prime examples.

But even in liberal-democratic systems, movements that want to bring about fundamental change are very likely to use transgressive as well as contained forms of action (Gamson 1990). We can illustrate the difference by turning to two American earlier examples: Although the rhetoric of the Tea Party was full of verbal pyrotechnics, most of its actions were familiar and contained, especially once it had settled on an electoral strategy of challenging the “Republican establishment.” In contrast, albeit softly, the activists of the Occupy movement transgressed routine politics by camping out in public spaces and refusing to move until they were forced to do so by the police.

In authoritarian regimes, there is much less open contention because of the risk of repression, but when contention does arise, it takes largely transgressive forms because the regime regards most forms of expression as dangerous. (But see Chapter 38 in this volume and Moss 2014, for a nuanced empirically-based discussion of this point.) In particular, authoritarian rulers regard organized contention as especially dangerous because it can spread. For example, the Chinese state has a repertoire of tools designed to absorb popular protest before the groups can form organized movements. In response to these risks, Chinese activists have devised innovative tactics such as “disguised collective action” (Fu 2016).

But if all political opportunities and threats were stable, there would be very little change. Yet we know that this is not the case. Below, we shift the focus from enduring features of political systems to variations in and changes of political opportunity and their effects on the ebb and flow of movements. Because much of the literature revolves around both variation and change, we draw selectively both on our own work and on the work of the numerous scholars whose research grows out of a basic interest in the reciprocal relations between opportunities and threats and political contention.

### **Changes in Opportunity and the Ebb and Flow of Movements**

While many scholars have focused on how the stable features of institutionalized political systems affect movement activity, as we noted above, the earliest work on political context by authors like Lipsky, Eisinger, Tilly, and others, stressed the powerful impact of changes in, and variable aspects of, political opportunity and threat. Indeed, virtually all of the early proponents of what would come to be known as the political process perspective saw the timing and ultimate fate of movements, and/or protest, as powerfully conditioned by the variable opportunities afforded challengers by the shifting alliance structure, ideological disposition, and instrumental calculus of those in power. Reflecting the influence of these early works, changes in opportunity quickly became a staple of social movement theory and were used to account for the emergence and development of movements as diverse as the American women’s movement (Costain 1992), liberation theology (Smith 1991), the anti-nuclear movement (Meyer 1993), farm worker mobilization in California (Jenkins 1985), and new social movement activity in Germany (Koopmans 1993, 1995), to name just a few early examples. Moreover, the rate at which new cases are offered in support of the general argument shows no signs of abating. Recent examples of work in this tradition would include: Brockett’s (2005) comparative analysis of



political movements in Central America, Karapın's (2007) study of "movements on the left and right in Germany since the 1960s," Steil and Vasi's (2014) comparative analysis of local pro-immigrant reform efforts in the USA between 2000 and 2011, and Jenkins, Jacobs, and Agnone's (2003: 277) systematic empirical account of the predictive relationship between political opportunities and "the frequency of African-American protest between 1948 and 1997."

As the emphasis on political context has grown, scholars of contention have offered many creative variations on the original model. For example, while nuancing McAdam's (1982, 1999) account of President Truman's advocacy of civil rights reform, Bloom's (2015) work is consistent with the central thrust of the political opportunity perspective, as is Felix Kolb's (2007) reinterpretation of the great victories of the civil rights struggle in the postwar period. In a string of publications, Amenta and collaborators have developed a compatible, if distinctive, "political mediation" model of the relationship between movements and political context (Amenta 2005; Amenta, Carruthers, and Zylan 1992; Amenta, Dunleavy, and Bernstein 1994; Amenta, Halfmann, and Young 1999). Finally, in his two book-length studies of "protest waves" in El Salvador, Almeida (2003, 2008) stressed the complex interplay of variable opportunities and threats in shaping the dynamics of contention.

### Sources of change in political opportunities and threats

If political opportunities (and threats) can expand and contract, what are the principal sources of these fluctuations? Perhaps the two major sources of variable political opportunities and threats are changes in the composition of institutional actors and the force of destabilizing events on political context.

#### *Changes in the Composition or Alignment of Institutional Actors*

Earlier, we sketched five enduring sources of political opportunities and threats. Changes in these variables often alter perceptions of opportunities and threats helping to catalyze individual movements or broader cycles of contention.

1. *Openness or closure to new actors:* New actors often enter the polity through changes in class structure or immigration, but more often through the suffrage. In 1911, the Italian electoral law was revised to allow almost all male citizens to vote. When this reform was implemented in 1919, following a war that had been disastrous for the Italian economy and for the legitimacy of the elite, it opened the gates to Benito Mussolini's fascist movement, which was able to come to power a mere two years later (Tarrow 2015: Chapter 4). Conversely, when Mussolini's government closed down the electoral process after 1926 and arrested many of his political enemies, opposition movements were forced underground or into exile, not to return until World War II opened new opportunities for an armed Resistance movement.
2. *Stability or instability of political alignments:* Stable political alignments are unlikely to leave much space for insurgencies against the existing party system, which was the case for most of America's history, with a few notable exceptions. For example, in the 1850s, the decline of the Whigs and the splits among the

Democrats opened space for two movements – the Abolitionists and the Free Soil Party – to come together in a new movement-party, the Republican Party, which elected a little-known mid-western lawyer, Abraham Lincoln, as President in 1860 (Tarrow 2015: Chapter 3). Similarly, in the 1960s the embrace of civil rights reform, first reluctantly under President Kennedy, and later more aggressively by Lyndon Johnson, fractured the New Deal coalition, setting in motion a process of sustained racial and regional realignment that brought to a close the preceding period of Democratic dominance and ushered in the rise of an increasingly influential and conservative GOP (McAdam and Kloos 2014).

3. *Influential allies or supporters*: A polity is often seen as made up of “insiders,” who run the system and “outsiders,” who hammer at its gates to gain entry. But this leaves out a band of intermediate actors who straddle the boundaries of institutional politics, or who reach out from within the system to challengers whose goals they embrace or hope to advantage (Tarrow 2012; Tilly 1978). This was the case of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party in the 1930s, which passed the Wagner Act to empower previously excluded trade unions. As a result, the AFL and the CIO became part of what came to be called “the New Deal coalition,” which governed American national politics until the 1960s. Conversely, the Taft-Hartley Act, passed in 1947 by a newly-elected Republican majority in Congress, prohibited some union activities, such as sympathy strikes, secondary boycotts, and discrimination against non-union members, and required union officers to take an oath that they were not communists. The result was a weakening of the American labor movement from which it has never recovered.
4. *Changes in repression or facilitation*: Repression we define as the attempt by a regime or its agents to end movement challenges through physical control. But repression is only one form on a spectrum of modes of social control, some of which aim to slow down or paralyze protest tactics, while others attempt to demobilize dissent by removing the resources for future action. Jules Boykoff (2007: 36) has studied various forms of social control, ranging from legal prosecution, employment discrimination, hearings, surveillance, infiltration, and other forms of harassment to direct violence against demonstrators. Jennifer Earl (2003) has classified protest control into 12 different forms, based on variations in the links between state agents and national elites, which combine (1) the identity of the actor engaging in protest; (2) the links between state agents and national elites; and (3) the form of protest control, ranging from military coercion to legal and financial pressure. Earl’s own work shows that we cannot reduce the potential or actual threats to protesters to the overt use of police violence against them and that even states which have predominantly “soft” prevailing strategies sometimes use violence against those they consider a threat to public order.

As Tilly noted long ago in 1978, repression/facilitation are parts of the prevailing strategies of a regime toward protesters, but they vary across social and political sectors and over time. Regimes’ facilitation or repression varies between social and political sectors in response to elites’ hopes or fears that groups will either support or undermine their power. The most glaring variation in American history is the manipulation of the electoral machinery to favor some groups – for example, rural voters who are overrepresented in most state legislatures – or disfavor others, for example, African-Americans,

both during the Jim Crow era and more recently. Political repression also varies over time, both as a result of which party or ruling group is in power or in response to the changing political climate and to destabilizing events, to which we now turn.

### Destabilizing events

What kinds of events tend to destabilize political systems in ways that expand or contract opportunities for, or threats to, movement groups? There is no simple answer to the question. As McAdam noted: “A finite list of specific causes would be impossible to compile ... *any* event or broad social process that serves to undermine the calculations and assumptions on which the political establishment is structured occasions a shift in political opportunities” (1982: 41; emphasis in original). He did, however, identify a smaller subset of events that he describes as especially “likely to prove disruptive of the political status quo.” We take up what we see as the two most important of those identified by McAdam: *war* and *economic crises*. While wars profoundly close off the opportunities for contention, as governments curtail rights and citizens “rally round the flag,” and economic crises remove resources from citizens, both war and economic crises have variable effects on both the formation and the character of social movements.

#### *War and movements*

James Madison long ago warned that war curtails rights, and for this reason, counselled against the creation of a standing army against his political opponent, Alexander Hamilton. As Madison warned, “Of all the enemies to public liberty, war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded, because it comprises and develops the germ of every other” (1985: 491–492). As historian Porter found, “A government at war is a juggernaut of centralization determined to crush any internal opposition that impedes the mobilization of militarily vital resources” (1994: xv). Such warnings led legal theorist Scheppele (2006) to argue that modern warfare creates incentives for states to “put people in their place” – that is, to prevent them from protesting. The American Civil War and the two World Wars led to heavy restrictions of rights – especially of groups that were suspected of disloyalty to the regime (Tarrow 2015).

Yet wars have also triggered episodes of contentious politics, first, against the extraction of taxes and the forced quartering of soldiers, then against the draft and the scarcity of food for the civilian population, then against the regime as a whole, as in the Russian Revolution, and, finally, in movements against war itself and in favor of peace (Cortright 2014; Meyer 1993). Moreover, in war’s wake, citizen groups of all kinds have profited from state weakening and from newfound militancy to demand new or expanded rights. It was in response to wartime sacrifices that women were granted the suffrage after World War I, that the GI Bill of Rights was passed at the end of World War II, and that 18-year-olds were given the vote during the Vietnam War (Mettler 2004).

#### *Economic crises*

Similarly, economic crises have contradictory effects on contentious politics. On the one hand, during economic crises, there is less demand for labor, leading to layoffs and the weakening of the bargaining power of unions. But as grievances

grow and governments respond to the crisis with austerity programs, mobilization often grows among both workers and others, as we have seen during the Great Recession in both Europe and the United States (Bermeo and Bartels 2014). The latest crisis in the western economies, touched off by the collapse of the American financial sector in 2008, created new insurgent movements in Spain, Portugal, Greece, and the United States, both on the radical Left and on the populist Right (della Porta 2015).

### **Reciprocal effects of opportunities and institutions**

Up to this point we have focused exclusively on the ways in which various kinds of facilitative changes or ruptures in systems of institutional politics may stimulate movement emergence or growth. But the relationship between these variables is reciprocal. If changes in political opportunities shape the prospects for movement emergence or success, the reverse is true as well (Tilly 2006). That is, once they are mobilized, movements have the capacity to reshape or modify the systems of institutional power within which they are embedded.

The volume of work on the topic of “movement outcomes” is now so large as to preclude an exhaustive summary. Fortunately, the chapters in this volume (see Part V in this volume) devoted to the topic spare us the need to systematically summarize this body of scholarship. Still, we see a selective review of some of the more influential works in this tradition as appropriate. Two movements in particular show how profound the effects of social movements have been on American political institutions: the civil rights movement and the women’s movement.

With respect to civil rights, Andrews (1997, 2001, 2004) has carefully assessed the variable impact of the civil rights movement on a number of institutional outcomes (e.g. voter registration rates, number of black elected officials, size of anti-poverty programs) in Mississippi; Luders (2010) fashions a general “cost-assessment” theory of movement outcomes that looks, not at the decisions of government officials, but at economic actors; and Gillion (2013) goes beyond the usual focus on the signature legislative gains of the civil rights struggle to consider the movement’s effect on judicial and presidential outcomes.

With respect to the women’s movement, Banaszak (1996) has identified key factors that shaped the variable impact of the US women’s suffrage movement over time, showing how this movement affected electoral institutions and outcomes; McCammon et al. (2001) assess the long, protracted, but ultimately successful effort of the women’s suffrage movement to secure the franchise; Clemens (1997) demonstrated the impact of innovative women’s movement organizing on the structure of interest group politics; and Katzenstein (1998) shows the profound impact of feminism on two unlikely institutions: the armed forces and the Catholic Church.

More generally, McAdam and Kloos (2014) attribute the deep divisions in contemporary American society – political, economic and racial – to the centrifugal force of a series of movements, first, on the left in the 1960s, and since then mostly on the right, in a process of “asymmetric polarization.” These movements have fundamentally changed the “racial and regional geography” of American politics and pushed both parties off center and toward their respective ideological margins.

In general, American politics has been shaped throughout its history by an ongoing tug-of-war between movements, parties, and government institutions.

Repertoires of contention are not only shaped by regimes and institutions; over the long run, they shape them as well. For example, the strike, which was at first a transgressive form of collective action, eventually became a contained form of contention guided by legislation, habit, and routine interactions (Tarrow 2011). The same is true for other contained forms, like marching on Washington, a practice which descended from a spontaneous demonstration by the “Bonus Army” demanding bonuses for service in World War I, before being adopted in the civil rights demonstrations of the 1960s (Tilly and Tarrow 2015: 51–52). Eventually, marching on – or in – Washington became a routine way of demonstrating a movement’s strength and determination.

But as contained forms of contention continue to dominate within American politics, a “forbidden” form – terrorism – has diffused dangerously around the world (see Chapter 37 in this volume). This has had profound effects on aspects of the American state, ranging from the merely annoying – i.e. security checks at airports – to ones that threaten civil liberties and human rights – e.g. the use of secret courts and the infiltration of privacy. Whether these changes are producing a “Schmittian” involution in the United States (Agamben 2005) or merely a shift in the balance of “infrastructural power” toward the government (Tarrow 2015) remains to be seen. What is certain is that violent contention in the form of terrorism is having a profound effect on institutional politics.

## Critiques and Extensions

In his article in the *American Sociological Review*, Bloom wrote that “political opportunity theory has proven extremely generative” (2015: 391) in alerting movement scholars to the importance of political context and the variable vulnerability of regimes to insurgent challenge. That said, the theory has also been “generative” of critiques of various aspects of the perspective as well as a host of extensions and permutations of the general framework. Here we review what we see as the most significant criticisms – structural bias, indifference to non-state targets, and overemphasis on opportunity over threat – before adding one of our own – a “movement-centric bias” – and then turning to some of the theoretical “extensions” we see producing a new and improved conceptual perspective on the political contexts of contention.

### Structural bias

The earliest and perhaps most common critique of the political process perspective focused on what was seen as the “structural bias” reflected in much of the work in this tradition (Bloom 2015; Goodwin and Jasper 1999; Joppke 1993; McAdam 1999: xi; Polletta 1999). Too often, according to critics, political opportunities were treated as objective features of political contexts that virtually compel movement action in a kind of deterministic response to environmental stimulus. While agreeing

with this critique, it should be clear that the bias is not inherent in the model. As Kriesi (2004: 77–78) noted in his chapter on “political context and opportunity” in the first edition of this *Companion*:

Nothing in the general approach [is inherently deterministic] ... Thus the earliest version of the political process model—McAdam’s (1982: 48–51) account of the civil rights movement—was already very much aware of the subjective elements mediating between opportunity and action ... and he, at the time, criticized the proponents of both the classic and resource mobilization perspectives for ignoring [interpretive processes].

If not inherent in the theory, however, the distinction between objective political conditions and their subjective interpretation was missing from much of the work that the model inspired. Perceived and socially constructed opportunities gave way in later work to “political opportunity structures” (POS) and, with this shift in emphasis, what had originally been conceived of as an interpretive account of movement emergence – albeit with structural stimuli – had morphed into a structurally determinist one. What rightly troubled the critics was the implicit claim that objective shifts in the ruling party, institutional rules, or some other dimension of the “political opportunity structure,” virtually *compel* mobilization. This, as they were wont to point out, is a structuralist conceit that fails to grant to collective meaning-making its central role in social life.

The good news is that the structural determinist applications of political process theory have largely given way to more processual, interpretive formulations. With the theory’s emphasis on the ongoing interaction of movement and state actors within a shifting and necessarily constructed political context, research in the “political mediation” tradition clearly conforms to the latter framework. More importantly, without invoking any specific theory, the best recent work in the field also suggests adherence to this more interpretive, interactive conception of political context and movement dynamics.

Recent works help to make our point. In her 2012 book, *The U.S. Women’s Jury Movement and Strategic Adaptation*, comparing the development and impact of the movement in 15 states over time, McCammon argues that progress was fastest in those states where activists showed the greatest skill at reading and responding to the shifting political and cultural “exigencies” confronting them. Similarly, in their comparative study of variation in the level of “transgressive protest” directed at corporate, educational, and other institutional targets, Walker, Martin, and McCarthy (2008) offer a similarly dynamic, interpretive, account of their findings. Just as the strategic responses of McCammon’s activists reflected their evolving understanding of the targets of their actions, Walker et al. see the specific repertoires deployed by the movements as reflecting a sophisticated understanding of each target’s vulnerabilities and its capacities – or lack thereof – to respond to movement tactics.

### Indifference to non-state targets

A second critique of the political process perspective on context challenges the theory’s preoccupation with formal state institutions and actors as the central targets of movement activities. While no doubt germane to many conflicts, contexts other than

institutionalized systems of state authority are relevant to an understanding of movements. This was the key point in Snow's (2004) article on movements as challenges to authority. While other authors had voiced this criticism before, no one did so in as much detail as Armstrong and Bernstein in their 2008 article in *Sociological Theory*. Moreover, they deployed their critique in the service of an alternative perspective, what they term "a multi-institutional politics approach to social movements." The central insight of the perspective is straightforward: the wide variety of movements that we encounter in the contemporary world aim at a far more varied set of targets and institutional contexts than suggested by the state-centered version of the political process model.

Armstrong and Bernstein make a good case: By privileging political movements over all others, proponents of the political process perspective unwittingly have marginalized other targets and indeed, other types of movements, within the field of social movement studies. Happily, the impact of this second line of critique is inspiring research on a much broader array of movements and targets. The Walker et al. (2008) article on the determinants of movement tactics against corporate and educational targets is only one example of the broadening of empirical work in the field. But it also fits with what is almost certainly the single most prominent line of new work to emerge in the last decade or so. We refer to research that looks at movements that target corporate or other economic actors.

The list of works in this area includes Ingram, Yue, Rao's (2010) analysis of the dynamics of strategic interaction between company officials and anti-Walmart activists; King's (2008a, 2008b) work on both stakeholder activism and its impact on the factors that shape the way corporations respond to movements that target them; Raeburn's (2004) detailed account of lesbian and gay challenges to corporate workplace practices; Schurman and Munro's (2010) book on the dynamics of contention shaping the growing conflict between agribusiness and their varied movement opponents; and Soule's 2009 book, *Contention and Corporate Social Responsibility*. But as we will argue below, this new strand of work on contention against non-state targets can profit from engagement with the political process perspective.

### Threat and opportunity

In *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Tilly (1978) assigned equal weight to threat and opportunity as catalysts of emergent collective action. The other early proponents of the political process approach, however, generally downplayed the causal significance of threat in deference to a singular preoccupation with expanding political opportunities (see Chapter 2 by Almeida in this volume, on the importance of threats). McAdam (1982), for example, made no mention of threat in his formal explication of the model. This led to a third important critique of the political process perspective, the failure to grant any real significance to the role of perceived threats, as opposed to opportunities, in the genesis of emergent collective action. This lacuna made it difficult for the early proponents of the perspective to understand whole categories of movements, from ethnic conflict triggered by fears of economic and political competition from other racial/ethnic groups to the wide array of reactive movements that arise in response to "suddenly imposed grievances" (Walsh and Warland 1983) or other perceived NIMBY-style threats (Snow et al. 1998).

The stress on opportunity also did not square with the inconsistent findings regarding the relationship between repression and collective action. If we think of repression as the contraction of opportunities, then an increase in repression should typically lead to lower levels of protest or other forms of collective action. We know, however, from the extensive empirical literature on repression, that this is not always the case. Even controlling for other factors, repression often presages higher levels of insurgent action (Khawaja 1993; Olivier 1991; Rasler 1996). If we think of repression as a form of threat, the failure to assign equal predictive significance to threat and opportunity becomes all the more apparent. Today scholars of contention are apt to see movements as shaped by a complex mix of perceived threats and opportunities, as would-be insurgents seek to make sense of the political and other contexts in which they are embedded.

Ongoing empirical work on repression continues to yield findings that speak to the significance of both threat and opportunity as catalysts of protest (Earl 2003). Scholars of ethnic conflict and violence continue to adduce evidence consistent with competition theory's emphasis on perceived economic and political threats in the genesis of contention (Olzak 2006). And reactive, NIMBY-style, collective action against all manner of perceived threats, remains perhaps the single most common type of protest world-wide. Adding to this, the large number of recent studies that assign principal causal significance to the role of perceived threat in the origin of a movement affords a sense of how analytically central threat has become to the study of contention. A remarkable example in this regard will serve to make the point: Maher's (2010) study of "threat, resistance, and collective action" in the three Nazi death camps of Sobibor, Treblinka, and Auschwitz. Another is Einwohner's (2006) work on Jewish resistance in the Warsaw ghetto.

### **A movement-centric bias**

To these three critiques of the political process perspective we add one of our own. We worry that, relative to the "early days," the field is now far more "movement-centric" and less focused on the relationship between movement and context, even as the field has grown exponentially since its modest beginnings in the 1970s and the 1980s. The absence of a recognized field of social movement studies, circa 1970, forced those scholars whose works defined the emerging field to read widely and frame their work for much broader audiences. Some situated their work within the literature on political economy (Paige 1975; Piven and Cloward 1977; Schwartz 1976; Skocpol 1979); still others within organizational studies (McCarthy and Zald (1973, 1977); and others in world systems theory (Arrighi, Hopkins, and Wallerstein 1989). For their part, those who shaped the emerging political process perspective were in dialogue with colleagues in political science and political sociology (Eisinger 1973; McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1983; Tilly 1978). These scholars simply did not have the luxury of framing their work in terms of a very specific body of social movement theory and research.

As the field developed, however, it quickly grew sufficiently large as to serve as its own primary audience, allowing it to become increasingly insular and self-referential in the process. As Walder observed in his 2009 critical review of the field, social movement scholarship is now squarely – and narrowly – focused on mobilization, on



those who mobilize, and in general, on internal movement dynamics. An examination of the index of the first edition of *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* affords a telling reflection of the narrowness that has come to characterize social movement studies. (But note the section entitled “Thematic Intersections in the current edition of this book.”)

Consider the following list of index entries that reflect a broader *contextual* understanding of movements:

- Capitalism/capital – 5 pages;
- Economic instability – 2 pages;
- Elections/electoral systems – 6 pages;
- Political parties – 4 pages;
- State(s)/state breakdown – 49 pages;
- World economy – 2 pages;
- World system theory – 8 pages.

With the exception of “state(s)/state breakdown,” the listings for these contextual topics are somewhat meager. If, at the outset, the field was substantially concerned with understanding movements in macro-political and economic context, this broader “external” focus has atrophied considerably. Contrast the paltry numbers reported above with the large number of listings for the following set of movement-centric topics:

- Collective identity – 47 pages;
- Emotions – 30 pages;
- Framing/frames – 96 pages;
- Mobilization – 75 pages;
- Social movement organization – 48 pages;
- Tactics/tactical repertoires – 39 pages.

We want to be clear about our argument. There is *nothing* wrong with the focus on internal movement dynamics. Forty years of scholarship on social movements have yielded great gains in our understanding of this most important form of purposive collective action. Our concern is with the balance and interaction between this *internal* focus on movement dynamics and how these movements relate to, engage with, are born of and often modify the *external* political, economic, cultural, and legal contexts in which they are embedded. In the next section we examine two growing areas of interest that connect movements with crucial interlocutors – courts and political parties.

### Extensions and combinations

If there have been serious and constructive criticisms of the approach we have just described, there have also been creative extensions and combinations. We illustrate this with two extensions – the relations of movements to courts and parties – and with one major combination – the linkages between economic factors and the political process.

*Movements and elections*

Elections offer opportunities for contention in both liberal-democratic and authoritarian regimes. As we have argued elsewhere (McAdam and Tarrow 2013), movements can transfer their activism to support friendly parties in elections, as the American trade unions have done since the 1930s. This was the pattern of the Tea Party movement, which arose as a grassroots and “astroturf” movement in 2010 and transferred its activism to the Republican Party (Skocpol and Williamson 2011). Movements can also react to disputed elections that they oppose, sometimes leading to “electoral revolutions,” as occurred in the Balkans and in the Caucasus (Bunce and Wolchik 2011). Movements can also bring about changes in parties’ electoral fortunes. Think of the election of Lincoln in 1860 and of Roosevelt in 1932, or the impact of the anti-Vietnam War movement on the elections of 1968 and 1972; they were mainly the result of the intrusion of movements into the party system.

Movements can force parties to shift to the extremes in order to satisfy their demands (McAdam and Kloos 2014). They can also become parties themselves, as the Green movement did in Germany in the 1980s, becoming an institutionalized part of the party system. Such transformations often lead to the co-option of movement leaders as they enter parliaments, as Michels (1962) long ago predicted, but often have profound effects on the system as a whole, as the recent appearance of insurgent anti-institutional parties has done in Greece, Italy, and Spain (della Porta 2015).

*Movements and the courts*

Another set of institutions – legal institutions – have only recently come to the attention of social movement scholars. (See Chapter 17 by Boutcher and McCammon in this volume.) Legal scholars are rapidly coming to appreciate that social movements drive much legal change (Balkin 2011; Cole 2016; Edelman, Leachman, and McAdam 2010; McCann 1994), although the verdict is not unanimous (Rosenberg 2008). But our theoretical understanding of the relationship among law and social movements remains one-sided. In particular, little is known about the dynamics by which changes in law and lawmaking translate into changes in advocacy tactics and about the reciprocal relations between movements and legal institutions in these changes.

Ever since the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* came down from the United States Supreme Court in 1954, legal scholars have been acutely aware of the impact of court decisions on social change. But what has been less clearly recognized are the complicated relations between social movement organizations and legal change. While it is true that it was a movement organization – the NAACP – that brought the case against the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, less clear is the role of movements in the implementation – or *non*-implementation – of that decision. While some scholars have seen the Brown case as revolutionary, others have cast doubt on its long-term impact. One scholar even labeled the aspiration to bring about racial justice through the courts *A Hollow Hope* (Rosenberg 2008), pointing out accurately how effectively the decision was dismantled by state authorities in the white-dominated South.

How then was racial justice achieved in the wake of the *Brown* decision? To understand this outcome, we need to turn from the courts and the legislatures back to social movements. For it was not the original court-centered mobilization by the NAACP that brought about racial justice but the far more transgressive protests of

the sit-ins and other forms of direct action in the early 1960s that forced federal officials to intervene in the South and compelled the many instances of school integration that the courts had been unable or unwilling to enforce (Klarman 2004).

In both the relations between movements and parties and in legal mobilization on behalf of civil rights, the movement-centeredness we criticized in the last section would only take us so far; but neither could a sole attention to political institutions: it is in the reciprocal relations between public institutions and social movements that social progress was made in both areas; which takes us to our concluding remarks.

### *Combinations and permutations*

We argued earlier against a “movement-centric” approach to contentious politics, and would be untrue to our expansive approach if we did not recognize that “politics isn’t everything.” Take the emphasis on protests against non-state targets that we sketched in the last section, drawing on the work of Snow and others. Such an emphasis developed in the context of a critique of political process theory (Armstrong and Bernstein 2008), but it can also usefully be *combined with* that approach. For example, are anti-corporate movements more likely to emerge or be more successful under progressive governments than under corporate-friendly ones? Do non-state-targeting movements grow out of broader cycles of contention that initially target the state? And how do the goals of businesses and movements mesh, as we saw in the current coalition of privacy groups and tech businesses against the government’s campaign to force Apple to open its iPhones to surveillance? Linking challenges to non-state actors with changes in the political context may well be the next step in the expansion of the political process approach.

More broadly, how are changes in the economic system processed through contentious politics? Every economy in the West was stricken by the economic crisis that was touched off in the United States in 2008, but they did not all respond in the same ways. Some countries – like Canada – barely saw the rise of anti-austerity movements; some – like the United States – saw the near-simultaneous rise of a leftist and rightist populist movements; some – like Ireland and Iceland – saw immediate, but rapidly declining protests against their governments’ financial manipulations; while others – like Greece and Spain – have been profoundly roiled by new leftist movements that have shifted the alignments of their party systems.

Despite the appearance of politically-sensitive comparative accounts of the Great Recession by political scientists and sociologists (Bermeo and Bartels 2014; della Porta 2015), we still lack a comparative analysis of the effects of economic crisis that combines economic variables with the political process. “Bringing capitalism back in” and combining it with the political processing of economic crisis and revival may well be the next important step in the study of the political context of social movements.

## **Conclusion**

We have been charged in this chapter with reviewing work on the “political contexts” of social movements. Our interest in movements has always been, first and foremost, motivated by the conviction that the dynamic, reciprocal relationship

between movements and systems of institutionalized politics is among the most consequential forces of social and political change in society. This is true whether we examine enduring institutional sources of opportunity and threat, as we did in the first section, or their changing and variable sources, as we have done in the second section. The critiques and self-critiques in the third section were serious enough to produce revisions and permutations in the original theory and will – we hope – lead future scholars to learn from them in a positive fashion. The extensions of political process theory we have highlighted show that the promise of the study of political contexts of movements lies in examining their reciprocal relations with and within institutions.

We close with a confession and heartfelt celebration of the field of social movement studies. Even as we salute the broad, pioneering works that helped give birth to the field, we would be the first to admit that the best social movement scholarship today is far more sophisticated, both theoretically and methodologically, than the “classic” works in the political process tradition. Even as we decry the movement-centric bias we worry about, we have no trouble pointing to countless recent works that reflect the concern with context and the balance between “internal” and “external” foci that we are advocating here. Still, we would be remiss if, in bringing the chapter to a close, we did not urge the field, as a whole, to be mindful of the movement-centric narrowness that too often characterizes the field and to look for ways to redress the narrowness by taking context – of all kinds – more seriously.

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# The Role of Threat in Collective Action

PAUL D. ALMEIDA

## Introduction

This chapter highlights the role of threats or negative conditions that stimulate collective action. A wide variety of social movements and popular struggles are driven by threats – from local resistance over state and police repression to the global movement combating climate change. Indeed, the Women’s March against the newly inaugurated Trump Administration in early 2017 represented the largest simultaneous mass mobilizations in US history, with the organizers explicitly stating a threat to the protection of rights, health, and safety as the primary motive for the unprecedented demonstrations in the opening of their mission statement.<sup>1</sup> In the early history of political process theory, threats were examined in general terms by scholars such as Charles Tilly (1977: 14–24, 1978: 133–135) and Harold Kerbo (1982). The part played by threats in generating social movement activity offers a second strand of inquiry in addition to political opportunities within the political process tradition. In the 1980s and 1990s, political process scholars emphasized political opportunities more than threats in studies of movement emergence (McAdam 2011: 91; Pinard 2011; Van Dyke 2013; see also Chapter 1 by McAdam and Tarrow, in this volume). Since the late 1990s and early 2000s, beginning with influential works by Jasper (1997), Snow et al. (1998) and Goldstone and Tilly (2001), a growing body of empirical research has accumulated, featuring threats and worsening conditions as primary forces generating attempts at collective mobilization (Almeida 2003; Andrews and Seguin 2015; Dodson 2016; Einwohner and Maher 2011; Inclán 2009; Johnson and Frickel 2011; Maher 2010; Martin 2013; Martin and Dixon 2010; Mora et al. 2017; Shriver, Adams, and Longo 2015; Simmons 2014; Van Dyke and Soule 2002; Zepeda-Millán 2017). In order to specify the conditions under which threats are more likely to activate social movement type activity this chapter discusses their relationship to grievances, the core components of political process theory, and resource

infrastructures. This review also develops a sensitizing scheme for the principal forms of structural threat in extant studies. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future lines of inquiry on threats with a focus on gaps in current scholarship.

## **Grievances and Threats**

One of the first tasks for social movement scholars centers on defining concepts in a concise manner. Often the terms “grievances” and “threats” are treated as synonymous. More recent scholarship treats them as analytically distinct. Early social movement research prioritized the role of grievances, often viewing them in terms of system strain and breakdown (Buechler 2004; Smelser 1962; Snow et al. 1998). Grievances involve the everyday problems subjectively experienced by communities and social groups. Snow and Soule (2010: 23) define grievances as “troublesome matters or conditions, and the feelings associated with them – such as dissatisfaction, fear, indignation, resentment, and moral shock.” These grievances may be long-standing over decades or of recent occurrence. One important pre-existing condition for the emergence of social movement-type activity is that these grievances are felt collectively by a community or a social group and not just experienced at the individual level (Snow 2013). Communities and social groups are more likely to collectively attempt to resolve such problems when opportunities or threats enter the political environment of the aggrieved population. Opportunities provide occasions to address long-standing grievances via social movement-type actions. Political opportunities signal to communities experiencing adversity that if they mobilize in the present, they are more likely to alleviate existing wrongs and “collective bads.” Threats tend to have a different impact than opportunities by increasing the intensity of existing grievances or creating new ones (Bergstrand 2014). Indeed, Pinard (2011: 17) states in his extensive theoretical work on grievances that “threats can greatly increase the sense of grievances, as when the anticipation of increased hardships accompanies current ones.”

## **Political Opportunity and Threats**

Scholars define opportunities and threats at both the micro and macro levels of social life. At the micro level, empirical and theoretical work emphasizes the motivations of why individuals would engage in collective action with increases in political opportunities or threats (Goldstone and Tilly 2001). Opportunities offer the possibility of gaining new advantages and benefits by engaging in social movement activity (*ibid.*). Life will be better if the collective effort succeeds (Tarrow 2011: 160–161). Threats drive individuals into collective mobilization by making current conditions worse if defensive action is not undertaken.<sup>2</sup> At this micro level of motivations and incentives, opportunities and threats need to be perceived by the relevant actors (see Chapter 1 by McAdam and Tarrow, in this volume). Social constructionist perspectives assist in linking specific opportunities and threats to encouraging individual level participation in collective action. For example, scholars suggest that activists would need to diagnose particular threats in terms of defining the harms they create and attributing

culpability in a convincing fashion before mobilization can take place (Jasper 1997; Snow and Benford 1988; Snow and Corrigall-Brown 2005). In addition, moral economy theories (Auyero 2006; Scott 1976) connect cultural processes to the likelihood of opportunities and threats converting grievances into sustained campaigns of protest by contextualizing the particular hardship within the moral belief systems of the community or society in question (Simmons 2016).

At the structural level, scholars have elaborated more objective measures of opportunities and threats. The basic features of political opportunity structure are well codified in the works of McAdam (1996: 26), Tarrow (2011: 163–167), and Meyer (2004) (see also Chapter 1 by McAdam and Tarrow in this volume). The core dimensions of *elite conflict*, *institutional access*, *changing electoral alignments*, *external allies*, and *declining repression* are highlighted in this literature as the facilitating macro conditions encouraging attempts at collective mobilization. In more recent elaborations of the perspective, a new dimension of “the multiplicity of independent centers of power within the regime” has been introduced as an additional opportunity (see Chapter 1 by McAdam and Tarrow, in this volume). In order to give proper analytical weight to the role of various forms of threat, I move the dimension of “external allies” into the category of resource infrastructure (McCarthy 1996), since achieving links to sympathetic allies is partially related to the agency of would-be collective actors to reach out to others under settings of threat or opportunity.<sup>3</sup> The other primary dimensions of political opportunity are more representative of the positive conditions in the political environment favorable to the emergence of a social movement.

Tilly (1978: 134–135) contended that “a given amount of threat tends to generate more collective action than the ‘same’ amount of opportunity.” More recently, Snow et al. (1998), in developing a related “quotidian disruption” model of movement emergence, also postulate from Prospect Theory that groups experiencing potential losses are more motivated to engage in collective action than groups facing the possibility of new gains. Such propositions encourage analysts to be especially interested in more precisely defining types of structural threats that generate large-scale mobilization to guide empirical investigations.

Structural threats are less well established in the social movement literature. Structural threats act as negative conditions intensifying existing grievances and creating new ones in stimulating collective action. Emerging scholarship identifies at least four structural threats driving social movement activity: (1) economic-related problems; (2) public health/environmental decline; (3) erosion of rights; and (4) state repression. In the following sections the basic resource infrastructure permitting mobilization is discussed and these four structural threats are defined more precisely with empirical examples. Such an exercise seeks to balance the causal universe between political opportunities and threats by illustrating the prominent role of structural forms of threat in promoting collective action.

### Resource Infrastructure and Threats

In order to fend off threats, communities require some level of resource infrastructure. This infrastructure includes the human, organizational, material, technical, and experiential stockpiles of capital available to populations under various form of

threat, including those stockpiles possessed by sympathetic allies (Edwards and Kane 2014; Ganz 2009; see also Chapter 4 by Edwards, McCarthy, and Mataic, in this volume). Resource infrastructures are unevenly distributed across time and geographic space (Edwards and McCarthy 2004). This in part explains why so many grievances and threats fail to materialize into campaigns of collective action. A minimal resource infrastructure is necessary to launch a collective attempt at reducing ongoing and anticipated threats (Almeida 2003). More specifically, resource infrastructure perspectives predict stronger and longer-lasting threat-based mobilizations in communities with denser populations and communication networks, pre-established civic organizations and institutions (labor associations, neighborhood groups, schools, non-profit organizations, etc.), and past collective action experience than in communities lacking in solidarity and organizational vitality (Almeida 2007b, 2014; Andrews 2004; Cress and Snow 2000; Ganz 2009; Gould 1995; Reese, Giedritis, and Vega 2005).

To illustrate, consider one of the largest mass mobilizations in decades in the United States which occurred between February and May of 2006 over an impending Congressional Bill that heightened the criminalization of undocumented immigrants. The threat of legal repression (Menjívar and Abrego 2012) against millions of working-class immigrants with precarious residency status created a three-month-long campaign with demonstrations in hundreds of cities and towns across the nation, with some rallies reportedly reaching up to one million participants (Zepeda-Millán 2017). Bloemraad, Voss, and Lee (2011) report in their national study of the threat-based immigrant rights mobilizations in 2006 a strong correspondence between the locations of the marches and the locations of the strategic resource of immigrant freedom rides in 2003. In a local-level study of the same movement across four low-income cities in the Central Valley of California, Mora (2016) found that the cities with denser activist organizational infrastructures prior to 2006 were able to sustain mobilization over a much longer period of time in response to anti-immigrant legislation than localities lacking such prior activist networks.

In another study of threat-induced collective action of thousands of local protests against free market reforms in Central America, Almeida (2012, 2014) showed that municipalities with higher levels of state and community infrastructures (administrative offices, highways, universities, labor associations, leftist oppositional parties, and NGOs) were more likely to participate in campaigns of defensive mobilization. Between the 1980s and the early 2000s, Martin and Dixon (2010) also find resistance to the threats of post-Fordist economic restructuring in the United States in the form of labor strikes was much more forceful in states with the organizational resource of labor unions and labor union membership. In their exhaustive event history study predicting the diffusion of Occupy Wall Street encampments protesting increasing wealth inequality across over 900 US cities, Vasi and Suh (2016: 150–151) conclude that:

Despite the movement's anarchist roots and horizontal organizing structure, it benefited from the presence of universities and a progressive community, which provided organizational resources such as meeting spaces and informal networks between activists. These findings demonstrate that organizational resources matter, even for movements that claim to be decentralized and that rely heavily on cyberbrokerage to connect activists.

The above empirical studies all indicate that excluded social groups enjoy a higher probability of collectively resisting threats when a resource infrastructure is available. These works represent a variety of methodologies, settings, forms of threat, and all incorporate variations in resource infrastructure levels within their cases. Beyond establishing the critical intervening role of resource infrastructures in converting threats into collective action, it is necessary to more precisely define common forms of threat found in existing social movement studies.

## **Structural Threats**

In the past two decades, a series of theoretical and empirical studies have highlighted the primary role of threat in generating sustained mobilization. Four broad dimensions of threat tend to appear as the most prominent: (1) economic-related problems; (2) public health/environmental decline; (3) erosion of rights; and (4) state repression.<sup>4</sup> In this section each form of threat is defined, connected to stimulating joint actions, and supported with empirical examples from the social movement literature. Just as political process scholars have developed core dimensions of political opportunity, a similar set of fundamental threats can be established.

### **Economic-related problems**

Problems related to economic conditions are perhaps one of the most common forces motivating threat-induced collective action throughout modern history. There is an abundance of ways that economic and material circumstances catalyze attempts at defensive mobilization. From general economic crises that raise levels of mass unemployment and sharpen income inequality to issues of government austerity and access to land for rural cultivators, a wide range of economic forces may encourage groups to engage in protest (Caren, Gaby, and Herrold 2017). After ethnic and religious conflict and state repression, economic-related issues are likely driving some of the largest mobilizations of the past few decades (Almeida 2010).

Since the 1980s, the Global South has experienced several waves of protests over economic austerity, privatization, and other economic liberalization measures (Roberts 2008; Silva 2009; Walton and Seddon 1994). In some countries, the massive demonstrations against neoliberal reforms in the 2000s broke national records as the largest documented street marches. These cases include health care privatization in El Salvador, a free trade treaty and utility privatization in Costa Rica, and social security reform and privatization in Panama (Almeida 2014). By the late 1990s and early 2000s, Latin America alone had experienced thousands of individual protest events over free market reforms (Almeida 2007a; Almeida and Cordero 2015; Bellinger and Arce 2011; Ortiz and Béjar 2013; Seoane, Taddei, and Algranati 2006). Similar events responding to neoliberal threats can be found in Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe (Abouharb and Cingranelli 2007; Almeida 2016; Beissinger and Sasse 2014). In the 2010s, the largest demonstrations reported in the southern European nations of Greece, Portugal, and Spain were also driven by government economic austerity programs (della Porta 2015; Kousis 2014; Rüdig and Karyotis 2014).

Mass unemployment and high concentrations of economic inequality also have led to dramatic campaigns of collective action around the globe (della Porta 2017; Dodson 2016; Kawalerowicz and Biggs 2015). In the 1930s, the economic Depression led to mass mobilization of the unemployed in the United States (Kerbo and Shaffer 1986; Piven and Cloward 1979), Britain, Australia, El Salvador, Chile, and Costa Rica. Declining economic conditions have also stimulated mobilizations by the homeless and their advocates in major US cities (Snow, Soule, and Cress 2005). One of the largest social movements in Latin America in the late 1990s and early 2000s was Argentina's unemployed workers movement that faced similar levels of job losses as the United States in the 1930s (Auyero 2002; Rossi 2017). Even rightist and nativist mobilization has been empirically linked to the explicit threats of unemployment and de-industrialization (DiGrazia 2015; Van Dyke and Soule 2002). Mass unemployment, dismissals, labor flexibility laws, and labor market precariousness have also driven social movement campaigns in Europe over the past two decades (della Porta 2015). Plant closures provide a particularly compelling catalyst to working-class mobilization in regions undergoing economic restructuring throughout the world (Auyero 2002; Moody 1997), and especially in China in recent decades (Chen 2014). Labor unions have played a major role in the movements against austerity and mass unemployment, especially in countries with a large industrial base and public infrastructure (Almeida 2007a, 2016). The Occupy Wall Street movement, with over 1000 reported protest events and encampments across the United States in the Fall of 2011, sought government intervention in wealth distribution in general, and specific local policies such as moratoriums on housing evictions and foreclosures.

Rural struggles over the loss of cultivable land and global "land grabs" are also materially based and have driven collective action campaigns throughout the twentieth and early twenty first centuries in the interior regions of the developing world (Enríquez 2010; Hall et al. 2015; Schock 2015a). The list of potential economic-based threats is profuse, including struggles over labor exploitation, regressive taxation, affordable housing, and consumer protection from price inflation. Especially important in precipitating economic-based movements and livelihood struggles is the level of disruption incurred by communities in their daily subsistence routines (Snow et al. 1998). These "quotidian disruptions" provide particularly potent incentives for groups to seek redress for potential losses in resources in the population under threat (*ibid.*). Given this ubiquity of economic-based threats across time and place, analysts must also incorporate measures of the resource infrastructure available to would-be movement participants to determine the likelihood of collective mobilization.

### **Public health/environmental decline**

Public health and environmental threats provide strong negative incentives for communities to mount a collective campaign for relief and compensation. The threat is to people's actual physical well-being and long-term health (Szasz 2007). At times, this form of threat creates "a suddenly imposed grievance" (Walsh, Warland, and Smith 1997); interruptions to daily patterns (Snow et al. 1998); or a "moral shock" (Jasper 1997). Johnson and Frickel (2011: 305) define "ecological threat" as the "costs associated



with environmental degradation as it disrupts (or is perceived to disrupt) ecosystems, human health, and societal well-being.” In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, public health and environmental threats appear to be on the rise as well as campaigns to slow down or reverse these deteriorating conditions (Shriver et al. 2015).

Starting in the 1980s, and continuing through the present, thousands of grassroots movements mushroomed throughout the United States and the world demanding “environmental justice” over the new types of pollution and public health harms associated with industrial societies and their byproducts (Mohai and Saha 2015; Szasz 1994; Taylor 2014). Most of these challenges are contested at the local level, and therefore do not receive national mass media coverage. Similar trends of community mobilization in reaction to local environmental threats have been documented and analyzed in a variety of global settings, including in urban China (Dong, Kriesi, and Kübler 2015), Japan (Almeida and Stearns 1998; Broadbent 1998; Stearns and Almeida 2004), and El Salvador (Cartagena Cruz 2017). Communities within the environmental justice framework organize over a variety of environmental threats, such as lead and pesticide poisoning, along with pollution associated with incinerators, industrial waste dumps, power plants, chemical leaks, superfund sites, and air contamination from high concentrations of particulate matter. A strong current within the environmental justice movement involves campaigns confronting environmental racism or the disproportionate threats of environmental harms documented in working-class communities of color (Bullard 2000; Bullard and Wright 2012). A related set of grassroots movements have launched campaigns over the local threat of the entry of big box stores eroding environmental quality and social tranquility in smaller towns and communities across the United States and beyond (Halebsky 2009; Rao 2008).

Mining and other extractive industry operations act as another major environmental threat mobilizing localities. Across the developing world, from the Philippines and Guatemala to Nicaragua, Panama, and Peru, indigenous communities have launched fierce campaigns over the perceived threats of mining to the ecological health and sustainability of their ancestral lands (Arce 2014; Camba 2016; Díaz Pinzón 2013; Sánchez González 2016; Yagenova 2015). Not just indigenous peoples, but rural populations throughout the Global South are joining in defensive struggles against the ecological threats associated with resource extraction industries and mega-development projects (Bebbington and Bury 2013; Cordero 2015).

At the other end of production, environmental threats from continued global industrial expansion and carbon output appear to be one of the main promoters of collective action in the twenty-first century. More specifically, the transnational movement for climate justice is responding to the long-term threat of global warming. By 2009, the movement reached the capacity to mobilize events in most countries on the planet, often in simultaneous and coordinated actions. During the United Nations Climate Summit in New York City in September 2014, the mass demonstration reached up to 400 000 participants locally with over 2000 additional events held around the world. Similar to economic-based threats in terms of variety, a whole host of public health and environmental threats may act as the main triggers of collective action.

### Erosion of rights

Another threat involves the erosion of rights. When rights have been extended for a substantial period where populations have become accustomed to their benefits, attempts at weakening them will often be met with collective resistance. An erosion of rights represents a relative loss of power (McVeigh 2009; Van Dyke 2013). The taking away of suffrage rights acts as one of the most fundamental offenses, creating defensive mobilization. Such governmental actions instantly place a large segment of the national population under similar circumstances. Elections that are perceived to be fraudulent or the canceling of elections frequently set off campaigns of civil society defiance (McAdam and Tarrow 2010; Norris, Frank, and Martinez I Coma 2015). For example, Kalandadze and Orenstein (2009) documented 17 major electoral fraud mobilizations between 1991 and 2005 in Eurasia, Africa, and Latin America. In a separate study between 1989 and 2011, Brancati (2016: 3–5) identified 310 major protests to “adopt or uphold democratic elections” in 92 countries. Since 2011, electoral mobilizations over perceived fraud have continued throughout the world, as in Cambodia in 2013. The 2009 general elections in Iran unleashed the largest post-Revolution mobilizations witnessed in the country as the “Green Movement” launched weeks of street marches contesting the election results as illegitimate (Kurzman 2011; Parsa 2016). Even the extremely close vote count in the 2006 Mexican presidential elections generated a month of mass street demonstrations and disruptions with claims of fraud by the defeated candidate of the left, Manuel López Obrador.<sup>5</sup> In late 2017 and early 2018, perceived fraud and systematic irregularities in the Honduran presidential elections resulted in multiple street marches of over 100,000 people and hundreds of roadblocks erected by citizens across the country.

Ongoing electoral fraud in multiple and sequential electoral cycles may even alter the *character* of collective action to take on more radical forms with the focus of overthrowing the prevailing regime (especially if combined with the threat of state repression). This follows the pattern of El Salvador in the 1970s. After a period of political liberalization in the 1960s, the military regime held four consecutive national fraudulent elections between 1972 and 1978. After several rounds of massive nonviolent demonstrations against the unfair elections, many sympathizers of the center left opposition parties radicalized their position and eventually threw their support behind insurgent revolutionaries, eventuating in El Salvador’s long decade of civil war and violence (Almeida 2003, 2008a). Finally, military coups that interrupt the constitutional order and overthrow popularly elected governments may also generate large-scale collective action. This was the case following the 2009 military coup in Honduras that ousted the democratically elected government of Manuel Zelaya. Immediately following Zelaya’s expulsion, an anti-coup mass movement erupted that sustained the largest mobilizations in Honduran history until Zelaya’s return in 2011, with street demonstrations reaching up to a reported 400 000 participants (Sosa 2012). A similar, but much more concise, dynamic of an anti-coup mass movement took place following the short-lived military coup in Venezuela in 2002 that attempted to drive out President Hugo Chávez Frías.

Other forms of eroding rights also serve as a primary catalyst to collective action. Often, these perceived rights violations come in the form of policy threats by state

officials (Martin 2013; Reese 2011). The threat of weakening reproductive rights laws and welfare services, for example, pushes pro-choice and welfare rights groups into campaigns of defensive action (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; Reese et al. 2005). Military invasions of other countries also operate as a policy threat leading to anti-war mobilization (Reese, Petit, and Meyer 2010; Heaney and Rojas 2015). Conservative groups in the United States often frame “government overreach” as a threat to rights in order to mobilize on a variety of issues such as over taxation, health care insurance, and gun ownership rights (Almeida and Van Dyke 2014; Lio, Melzer, and Reese 2008). The work on policy threats not only opens up critical questions about the conditions for initial movement emergence, but also leads to the potential for furthering our knowledge of movement-related outcomes (Amenta et al. 2010; Bosi, Giugni, and Uba 2016). The outcomes of threat-induced movements are vastly under-theorized and researched in comparison to mobilization outcomes generated by political opportunities. Policy threats provide one avenue for scholarly advance by constructing precise research designs that examine movement-related processes and their consequences on the final policy results (Almeida 2008b).

### State repression

A final major form of threat occurs when states coerce, harass, and repress citizens under their jurisdiction (see also Chapter 12 by Ghaziani and Kretschmer, in this volume). Along with the erosion of rights, the threat of state repression operates in stark contrast to the core political opportunities of a relaxation in state repression and widening institutional access, in that movements are responding to the closing down of political space as opposed to its opening (Goodwin 2001). The state repression literature offers a vast and complex accounting of the dynamics between governmental violence and popular response (Chang 2015; Davenport 2010; Earl 2011; Earl and Soule 2010). At times, state repression quells attempts at collective action because of the heavy risks incurred in the mobilization process (Johnston 2011). This aspect of state repression is more consistent with the political opportunity strand of political process theory. At other times, state and police repression encourages heightened attempts at protest (Brockett 2005). For example, police abuse cases against African American citizens in multiple US cities reached such a threshold by 2014, that activists launched the Black Lives Matter campaign with a reported 37 chapters across the United States by late 2016 (Bell 2016).

In authoritarian states, continued repressive action against nonviolent social movements may change the nature of collective action itself and switch the trajectory of protest onto a much more radical path (Alimi, Demetriou, and Bosi 2015; Almeida 2007b; Trejo 2016).<sup>6</sup> This was clearly the case in the Arab Spring cases of Libya and Syria, and, to a lesser extent, Egypt. These protests began as campaigns of mass non-violence in 2011 and 2012, or what Schock (2005; 2015b) refers to as “unarmed insurrections.” When the states of Libya, Syria, and later Egypt violently repressed these nonviolent challenges once they had been sustained for several months, the movements radicalized and began using violent and more military-style tactics (Alimi 2016). In contrast, in countries implementing softer forms of repression, states may “contain escalation” from converting into radicalized mobilization, as in the case of Jordan during the Arab Spring (Moss 2014). Scholars of revolutionary

movements find that radicalization appears much more likely under exclusionary types of authoritarian regimes that fail to incorporate the middle and working classes into structures of political participation or distribute the benefits of economic growth (Foran 2005; Goodwin 2001). At the micro level, outrageous acts of state repression also push individuals to take on new roles and identities as revolutionary activists and participants (Viterna 2013).

This unique property of repressive threat, with the potential to radicalize collective action, provides another major distinction from political opportunities and other types of threats (with the exception of fraudulent elections). Promising areas for advancing state repression research in terms of predicting the likelihood of protest escalation or demobilization include the severity and probability of the repressive threat being carried out (Einwohner and Maher 2011; Maher 2010), a cataloging of the coercive tactics used by the state (Moss 2014), and the precise type and level of resource infrastructure necessary to sustain mobilization under high-risk conditions (Loveman 1998; Pilati 2016).

Summary of Structural Forms of Threat

Table 2.1 summarizes the major forms of structural threat examined in the collective action literature and some of the most common types of corresponding movements. Table 2.1 does not offer an exhaustive typology, but a sensitizing scheme of frequently occurring threats. Economic-related threats produce movements struggling over material conditions – from government austerity measures to the loss of cultivable land. Movements responding to public health threats and environmental decline range from local struggles over pollution and contamination to transnational mobilizations attempting to slow down the pace of planetary warming.

The threat of eroding rights pushes two forms of movement type activities. First, when states cancel or hold fraudulent elections, this may lead to a massive round of protests against the loss of citizen voting rights and disenfranchisement. Second, newly impending or implemented governmental policies that are perceived by

Table 2.1 Major forms of threat

<i>Form of threat</i>	<i>Examples of collective responses</i>
Economic-related problems	Austerity protests, Unemployed worker movements, Occupy/Indignados, movements over loss of housing, land, affordable food
Public health/ environmental decline	Local actions related to disease and illness outbreaks attributed to government/Corporate ineptitude (e.g. Love Canal, Flint, Pesticide Poisoning, HIV/AIDS), Environmental Justice movements, Transnational Climate Justice movements, anti-mining and extractive industry movements, other environmental hazards
Erosion of rights	Fraudulent election protests, policy threat protest (reproductive rights, anti-war, welfare rights)
State repression	Protest campaigns against government harassment, arrests, killings, states of emergency, police abuse, and other human rights atrocities. Radicalized movements against authoritarian and repressive regimes.

particular constituencies as a loss of power, status, and/or protection, ranging from welfare and reproductive rights policies to gun ownership rights, are likely to facilitate mobilization (McVeigh 2009). These kinds of government measures often trigger group-wise mobilizations for the subpopulations perceived to be most threatened by the policies (Amenta and Young 1999). Repressive threats at times launch campaigns of mass resistance when governments kill popular civic leaders, commit massacres, or even lesser forms of police abuse and harassment. Under special circumstances, the threat of state repression has the unique property to potentially radicalize the form of collective action, resulting in both revolutionary and terrorist movements (see also Chapter 39 by Goldstone and Ritter on revolutions, and Chapter 40 by Beck and Schoon on terrorist movements, in this volume).<sup>7</sup> Many groups and advocates leading campaigns for human rights are also driven by the threat of state repression.

### The Future of Threat Research

This chapter has highlighted fundamental questions in the emerging literature on the primary role of threat in driving social movement activity. Students and scholars must continue to advance in our shared understanding of how negative conditions drive attempts at defensive collective action. Some of the largest mobilizations in the twenty-first century appear to be reacting to economic, ecological/health, and political threats.<sup>8</sup> Beyond relating threats to grievances, political opportunities, resource infrastructures, and developing more precise indicators of structural threats, several other tasks remain.

This review has separated threat environments from opportunity environments in order to provide sustained analytical attention to the often underemphasized role of worsening circumstances in stimulating collective action. In many contexts, communities subject to mobilization may likely face a third *hybrid environment* of opportunities and threats operating simultaneously. One area of further refinement is to better understand these “mixed” or hybrid environments that are driven by opportunities and threats. For example, McAdam et al. (2010) implemented such a design of 11 oil and gas pipeline projects crossing 16 developing countries using fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (QCA). They concluded that collective conflicts most often emerged under *both* conditions of threat (e.g. no benefits for the host country, potential for environmental harms) and opportunity (e.g. public consultation with affected local communities).

Another line of inquiry would be to construct even more precise and exhaustive sub-typologies of threat, for economic-based problems, public health/environmental decline, erosion of rights, and state repression. Given that each of these structural conditions provides a diversity of threats within each form, examining the differential impacts of each sub-type of threat would enhance our understanding of the kinds of specific threats that are most likely to encourage movement actions. For example, does a government austerity program trigger similar collective responses as mass unemployment? Will lead poisoning from the municipal water supply mobilize people the same way that local air contamination from polluting industries does? Other properties of threats also need more attention such as the magnitude, severity, and extensiveness of the threat in question.