

Democratic States and Social Movements: theoretical arguments and hypotheses.

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Author's Abstract:

In this paper we theorize the impact of democratic states on state-oriented challengers. We argue that aspects of states influence the overall mobilization of state-oriented challengers and the forms of their mobilization and collective action. We develop 12 hypotheses about the impact of state political institutions, democratic processes, bureaucracies, and policies on mobilization and provide illustrative evidence for each from studies of social movements. We also discuss the implications of the hypotheses for U.S. social movements. One key implication is that the U.S. state, comparatively speaking, has discouraged and continues to discourage social mobilization. Another is that the U.S. state has important systematic influences on forms of mobilization and collective action.

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Macro-social scholarship on social movements or challengers typically addresses questions about their mobilization for collective action or their impacts (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1988). To answer these questions, states have often been held to matter because challengers are often "state-oriented" (Amenta, Dunleavy and Bernstein 1994), in that they target the state and their goals can be achieved only by state action. Challengers that mainly target other societal actors often attempt to use states as leverage against their opponents, and even challengers that are mainly identity-oriented sometimes require state action to realize community-building goals. Perhaps for these reasons social movement scholars are focusing greater attention on states (Amenta and Zylan 1991; Goodwin 1995, Jenkins 1995; Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi 1995; Kriesi et al. 1995; McCarthy, Britt and Wolfson 1991; Tarrow 1994).

In this paper, we theorize the impact of democratic states on social movements. We follow those who have made institutional arguments concerning the development of public policies (Huber, Ragin and Stephens 1993; Orloff 1993; Skocpol 1992), new political parties (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Valelly 1989), labor movements and interest groups (Clemens 1997; Katznelson 1981; Shelter 1986), as well as social movements (Amenta and Zylan 1991; Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi 1995). Scholars argue that claims about the influence of "political opportunity structures" on social movements are sometimes pitched imprecisely (Gamson

and Meyer 1996; Goodwin and Jasper 1999; see McAdam 1996). Here we develop specific hypotheses concerning democratic states, which constitute a key part of political contexts and opportunity structures as they are typically conceptualized (Jenkins 1995; McAdam 1996). In developing our hypotheses we argue that states influence the potential for challengers' winning collective benefits and in that way influence both levels and forms of mobilization by state-oriented challengers. That said, we do not intend to provide a mono-causal theory. Other conditions and actors, such as new regimes, polity sponsors, pre-existing organizations, and new grievances among others, have been shown to influence mobilization (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1988). Also, different movements targeting the same state and different groups within the same movement have adopted divergent forms of action (Tarrow 1996). In addition, our claims are confined to state-oriented challengers and are also meant to be limited to states in relatively democratic polities, which are formally open to influence and typically discourage movements with revolutionary goals (Goodwin 1995).

We see the evolution of states similarly to how Tilly (1978:98-142) and McAdam (1982:40-43) view the evolution of political opportunities. Changes in states are cumulative and important, but not typically dramatic or influential in the short run. In developing our hypotheses, we go beyond the distinctions between "weak" and "strong" states prevalent in the literature on social movements (Kriesi 1995). Although we address "assimilative" and "disruptive" and "institutional" and "non-institutional" collective action (Kitschelt 1986; see McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996), our hypotheses consider forms of mobilization and types of collective action that go beyond these standard distinctions. We illustrate each of our hypotheses with evidence from studies of social movements.

Taken together, our hypotheses also suggest a rethinking of the impact of the American state on social movements. Kriesi (1995) argues notably that the U.S. state is a "weak" state - federal, functionally differentiated, directly democratic, and with a relatively incoherent system of public administration - which promotes assimilative strategies and higher mobilization overall. Kitschelt (1986) argues that the post-World War II American polity is "open" to social movements and thus should produce assimilative collective action strategies.⁽¹⁾ However, the implications of our hypotheses lead to different conclusions. It seems probable that the American state has been and remains significantly discouraging to challengers and is likely to produce collective action less assimilative than that of other rich capitalist democracies. Also, the American state is likely to have had and to continue to have other key impacts on the form of challenger mobilization and action.

Conceptual Definitions and General Expectations

To make our case we begin by specifying key concepts. Following in the tradition of Max Weber we define "states" as sets of political, military, judicial, and bureaucratic organizations that exert political authority and coercive control over people living within the borders of well-defined territories. States engage in action or "policy," including taxation, social spending, and regulatory policy, that is official, legitimate, binding, and backed by the aforementioned organizations (Skocpol and Amenta 1986). "Democratic states" are defined as those states whose leaders, forms, and policies are decided with key participation and input from everyday people. In such a state, suffrage is relatively inclusive, citizens have rights to associate, and the state is significantly responsible to elected officials (Dahl 1971).

By "challengers" or social movements we mean politically disadvantaged groups engaged in sustained collective action to secure their claims (Jenkins 1995). We distinguish them from "members of the polity" (Tilly 1978). In democratic polities challengers typically mobilize participants to publicize their cause and gain support and influence, more so than by mobilizing pecuniary resources. "Social movement mobilization" or social mobilization is the amassing of resources by challengers to engage in "collective action" - action intended to gain benefits from which members of the intended beneficiary group cannot be readily excluded. We distinguish between form and level of mobilization. The overall level of mobilization simply refers to the scale of the resources amassed by challengers. Given their outsider status, challengers are likely to engage at least occasionally in "unconventional" (Clemens 1997; Dalton 1988; Kriesi et al. 1995) as well as "non-institutional" (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996) or "disruptive" (Kitschelt 1986) collective action, but do not need to do so to fit our definition. Indeed, forms of mobilization and types of collective action are important issues in themselves (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996). Challengers can mobilize themselves widely or narrowly; they can be ideological or issue-oriented; they can be nationally or locally oriented. Challengers may engage in a variety of institutional actions, including lobbying, forming new parties, engaging in legal battles, or peaceful protests. For non-institutional activity, the possibilities range from terrorism to civil disobedience.

Our general premise is that states systematically influence social movements by influencing the returns to their collective action. Where aspects of states may repay challengers' action generously, we would expect, other things equal, that social mobilization would be greater. Similarly, to the extent that aspects of states lower the returns to action, we would expect it to diminish. Moreover, some aspects of states may systematically reward some forms of social mobilization and collective action more than others. In such circumstances - again, other things equal we would expect that these forms of mobilization would flourish. The opposite also holds good. Finally, if challengers have mobilized and acted to the point that

their interests are completely addressed by state policy, raising themselves in effect to members of the polity, we expect them to demobilize (see also Eisinger 1973).

States and Social Movements: Hypotheses, Implications, and Evidence

Specific aspects of states influence the potential returns to collective action and therewith social mobilization. As Kriesi (1995) argues, many aspects of states are typically fixed at any given point in time and confront all challengers and potential challengers as basic facts of political life. The long-term aspects of democratic states that matter most for social mobilization are the institutional frameworks and means by which citizens can influence the state. Medium-term aspects of the state that matter include state executive bureaucracies - the specific state organizations engaged in domestic political missions. As for the short-term, we argue that new policies can reshape politics, including the form and degree of social mobilization. We hypothesize that variation in state institutions, bureaucracies, and policies will help to explain variation in mobilization of challengers over time and across countries and subnational polities.

For each hypothesis we present the reasoning behind it. We also discuss where the American state stands with respect to this influence on social mobilization. Finally, we discuss evidence for the arguments, including over-time, comparative, and cross-sectional studies of social movements.(2) We begin with long-term aspects of states and work our way down to the short-term ones.

Centralization and Divided Authority

The degree to which a polity is centralized is often argued to influence the degree of mobilization and the forms it is likely to take (Kriesi 1995; Meyer 1993; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). Tilly (1986:395-398) notably argues that the process of state-making throughout the last several centuries has meant that challengers have increasingly turned from local concerns and have focused on the national polity. According to most hypotheses concerning current politics, federal or decentralized politics encourage mobilization generally, because they multiply the targets for action. Another hypothesis is that collective action is likely to be fragmented (Kriesi 1995).

However, federalism in itself does not necessarily increase the chances of winning collective benefits for challengers, and so we would not expect it to increase their mobilization overall. But if these politics have power and vary among themselves in how and the degree to which they are susceptible to the goals of challengers, they provide a variety of incentives to mobilize

in them and about them. In more centralized politics, the mobilization of challengers is likely to be less diverse because they face limited targets of action. And so we argue that federalism will have a greater impact on the forms of mobilization and action than on its overall level. Hypothesis 1: Decentralized politics encourage a wider variety of challengers to form and a diversity of forms of collective action aimed at lower-level targets.

What does this mean for the American case? The United States is highly federal, like Switzerland and Canada, because of the great authority granted to states, which is compounded by authority granted to municipalities. Over time, however, the U.S. central government has become increasingly important relative to its sub-national polities and, since the Second World War, has commanded a greater share of fiscal resources. The implications are that its relative decentralization would likely encourage a wider variety of mobilizations and forms of collective action, an effect somewhat tempered over time as power has become more centralized.

The hypothesis implies that American social movements should have become more centralized over time. There is some evidence along these lines from Gamson's (1990) historical study - which addressed all non-local American challengers in existence from 1800 through 1945. More than one-third of challengers appearing in the sample had their origins in the 31-year period after 1914, but only 15 percent in the 60-year period after 1800.

The hypothesis also implies that American mobilizations and those of other federal polities would focus more on non-national state actors than would mobilizations in more centralized politics. Although Rucht's (1989) analysis of the environmental movements in centralized France and federalist West Germany does not specifically address the influence of centralization of authority on forms of mobilization, the comparison provides some evidence for this hypothesis. Rucht finds that the French environmental movement is characterized by two internally "homogenous" and "compact" camps, while the three networks of the German movement exhibit a wider variety of forms and interconnections. Unfortunately, the relative influence of state structures on differences in the forms of mobilization in two countries is difficult to distinguish from other potential influences, such as political contexts and socio-economic and -cultural conditions.(3)

A second important aspect of the political system concerns the functional divisions of powers in the national government. Politics can be divided in power "horizontally" across the central government as well as "vertically" between the central government and lower level governments (Pierson 1994). Kitschelt (1986) and Kriesi (1995) have both posited that horizontal divisions promote mobilization. Autonomy in courts and legislatures, they argue, makes a polity generally more "open" to mobilization, as challengers can

target different political institutions.

We argue, however, that a polity with separated powers in itself does not automatically aid the mobilization of the politically disadvantaged. To the contrary, a political system with greatly separated powers provides various "veto" points over new state initiatives (Huber, Ragin and Stephens 1993; Skocpol 1992). The executive can thwart the legislature and vice versa, and both can be thwarted by the judiciary. If the goal of challengers is to prevent a new policy from being enacted, a political system with divided authority provides incentives for such action. Yet what typically differentiates members of the polity from challengers are the routine workings of politics. At any given moment the political world is working to the advantage of polity members, who typically need to take only defensive actions to retain privileges. In contrast, for state-oriented challengers everyday politics works against their interests and they typically need to establish new laws, programs, bureaucracies, and so forth to realize their claims. In a highly fragmented system, the ease with which new initiatives can be vetoed works against the aspirations of challengers. Hypothesis 2: A division of powers in the central government dampens the overall level of social mobilization.

Powers in the American national government are greatly separated and are more so than most other western democracies (Pierson 1994:32). The judiciary as well as the legislature has autonomy. The American Congress is also subdivided into committees with jurisdiction over specific issues; each committee is further subdivided, providing additional, partially autonomous sites for influence. Because the United States has a federal polity and the state-level polities are constructed similarly to the national one, these separations of powers are multiplied throughout the political system. Because such a fragmented system promotes the possibility of thwarting change, we would expect the U.S. political system to discourage social mobilization overall. Cross-national efforts to examine overall social mobilization have been limited, and typically cross-national studies focus on unconventional political activity rather than the activity or mobilization of challengers (Dalton 1988; Heunks 1996; Kriesi et al. 1995).(4) Also, existing cross-national studies have not been designed to appraise claims on overall mobilization, a central issue in the literature. This dearth of research makes it difficult to provide comparative evidence regarding our hypotheses on levels of mobilization.

Although radical separations of power likely dampen overall movement mobilization, we would hypothesize that these divisions encourage a wider variety of collective action - including suing through courts, proposing new legislation, attempting to influence bureaucracies concerned with the enforcement of laws. The profusion of different sites of potential collective benefits means that challengers with different strategies of action might plausibly

have an impact. Hypothesis 3: Divisions of powers encourage different types of collective action tailored to influence the various parts of the central state, especially action geared toward preventing the adoption of new policy. Specifically, we expect that the degree to which courts are autonomous, challenger action will take legal turns, and the degree to which legislatures and executive bureaus are autonomous, we would expect greater lobbying activity. Because divisions of powers make it easier for political actors to block new policy, moreover, collective actions will focus more on preventing policy than on initiating it.

Some studies provide suggestive evidence in favor of our hypotheses on the forms of mobilization and types of action. Collective action with many targets was characteristic of the U.S. civil rights movement (Burstein 1985; McAdam 1982). What is more, feminist mobilizations, which have spanned across many nations, had a variety of forms and targets in the American setting, as compared to European ones (Katzenstein 1987). The women's movement in the United States has employed a multi-front strategy to test the multiple points of access presented by the separation of the legislative, executive, and judicial powers (Costain and Costain 1987). The American abortion rights or "pro-choice" movement also had an especially wide variety of forms and targets leading up to its victory in 1973 (Staggenborg 1991).

Electoral Procedures and Mechanisms

Electoral procedures are long-term aspects of the political context that also influence social mobilization (Kriesi 1995; McAdam 1996). One crucial process is how legislative representatives are chosen. A basic distinction is between winner-take-all and proportional representation. Following long-standing but sometimes overlooked scholarship (Lipset and Rokkan 1967), we argue that winner-take-all electoral systems makes it difficult for any group to form a political party or to threaten plausibly to form one. Thus, this type of electoral system diminishes the potential of this important means for challengers to have an influence. The support that new radical parties can provide for other forms of challenges will also be lessened in a winner-take-all electoral system. Yet these electoral rules make it more likely that challengers - and polity members - will attempt to influence the existing parties and political representatives. Hypothesis 4: Winner-take-all political systems discourage the formation of political parties by challengers and tilt challengers' institutional efforts toward influencing existing parties and political leaders, whereas proportional representation systems have the opposite effect.

America has a winner-take-all electoral system and thus we would expect that social mobilizations in the United States are less likely to take the form or sustain the form of new political parties. Historical evidence seems to bear this out. The U.S. party system was set in the nineteenth

century with two "non-ideological" parties (Burnham 1970; Lipset and Rokkan 1967). This is an unprecedented record of political stability or, for our purposes, challengers failing to form lasting parties. Populists, Socialists, and Progressives, as well as advocates of states' rights, prohibition, and the environment among others - all have failed to gain a secure footing in the American political system despite great support at one time or another. In Gamson's (1990:277-285) historical study of American challengers through the middle of the twentieth century, no new party challengers that appeared in his sample won new benefits and four of five suffered "collapse." The hypothesis also suggests that social mobilizations in America are more likely to focus on influencing political party actors than on creating parties. According to Clemens's (1997) study of American women, farmer, and labor organizations, each abandoned strategies to form parties and instead turned to lobbying activity, which proved to be more useful.

Winner-take-all voting systems in other polities, such as those of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, also seem to discourage challenger party formation. Although there were many influences on the formation of "left-libertarian" parties in the 1970s and 1980s (Kitschelt 1988), no country with a winner-take-all electoral system was host to a significant one.

A second set of electoral rules concerns whether "direct democracy" by way of initiative and referendum is possible. Such direct electoral procedures make it possible for challengers to forgo standard institutional politics, for gains can be won by going directly to the electorate. For that reason, Kriesi (1995) suggests the initiative stimulates mobilization by the politically disadvantaged and of an assimilative sort. We disagree. This option is not limited to the politically disadvantaged, and it seems likely that these electoral procedures are not mainly employed by them. For this reason, we believe that initiatives and other direct democratic procedures probably do not stimulate the mobilization of the politically disadvantaged. Also, the impact that direct procedures have on the focus of social mobilization is likely to go beyond inducing assimilative action to influencing action of a particular sort. Hypothesis 5: Direct electoral procedures increase the chances that challengers will organize themselves around specific legislative plans of action, leading to more fragmented, issue-oriented mobilizations.

The initiative is available in some U.S. western states, and some evidence suggests that mobilizations around specific issues are more frequent in them. In U.S. old-age politics, the Townsend Movement, based on the "Townsend Plan" and state-level "baby" Townsend Plans in the 1940s, did better in these Western states (Amenta, Halfmann and Young 1999). Similarly, in the battleground of California, the Townsend Movement was confronted by mobilizations

around alternative old-age pension plans, such as "Ham and Eggs," which promised a similar sort of pension in the late 1930s (Holtzman 1963; Putnam 1970). Other issues have received national prominence by winning state-level initiatives. Moreover, the politically advantaged can also use this mechanism; California's Proposition 13 was orchestrated by real-estate interests to lower taxes (Lo 1990). Recent mobilizations around affirmative action and the rights of immigrants have worked in the same direction.

Democratic Rules and Rights

By way of contrast, we argue that the degree to which formally democratic institutions are inspired by democratic procedures is more important to mobilization than usually appreciated. By the extension of democratic rights we mean the lowering of legal restrictions on institutional political participation for everyday people. These rights include the ability to assemble and discuss issues. A highly democratized polity is also characterized by meaningful choices among parties or factions. An under-democratized polity is one in which political leaders are chosen by way of elections, but in which there are great restrictions on political participation, political assembly and discussion, voting, and choices among leadership groups. In the long run, the progress of political rights through the society increases social demands (Marshall 1963). As democratic rights spread, the state becomes increasingly a target, as challengers hope to establish claims directly through it (Tarrow 1994:72-73).

We expect the extension of democratic rights to influence both the level of challenger mobilization as well as the types of collective action chosen by challengers. When new groups are added to the electorate, the bids to gain representation of those remaining on the outside become more credible. The process of democratization also encourages the further mobilization of those who have gained rights to participate, but have not yet secured policies in their favor. Moreover, when everyday people cannot vote, political leaders and state officials have no fear of electoral reprisals from them, and so it seems plausible that movements of everyday people are more easily ignored or repressed. Hypothesis 6: Expansive and expanding political rights encourage social mobilization while restricted rights discourage it. A relative lack of rights to participate in formal political institutions also suggests that institutional action may be less worthwhile than non-institutional action. There are fewer reasons to work through institutional processes. Hypothesis 7: In under-democratized polities, challengers are more likely to focus on non-institutional actions.

Because the extension of political rights is central to the outcomes of the political process, it seems likely it will have additional effects on social mobilization. The configuration and evolution of rights will influence how groups will politically identify themselves and thus mobilize.

Hypothesis 8: Inclusions, exclusions, and restrictions in democratic participation and representation will induce group-wise mobilizations and adoptions of political identities along the lines of restriction and exclusion.

The United States has been characterized by a highly uneven historical, geographical, and group-wise pattern of democratization. Early suffrage for white males was effected in the 1830s - far sooner than in most European countries. Yet the enfranchisement of black men after the Civil War in the 1860s was followed by their disfranchisement in the South by the end of the century (Kousser 1974). For that reason and, to a lesser extent, restrictions on voting in many states in the North (Burnham 1970), the United States was a democratic laggard for most of the twentieth century. Needless to say, some parts of the decentralized American polity lagged further than others. Despite the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965, there remain differences in obstacles to voting that serve to mute the political voices of Americans - typically poorer on average - nominally granted the suffrage (Piven and Cloward 1989). Variation in voting is significant among rich, capitalist democracies (Hicks and Misra 1993), and the United States ranks low. These differences in voting are due in part to laws about registration and voting periods by which citizens are able to exercise the franchise (Lijphart 1997).

We expect a number of effects from this history and pattern of democratic inclusion and restriction. We would expect the relatively restrictive practices of the American polity to have discouraged social mobilization for most of the twentieth century and that the greatest discouragement would appear in the most restrictive parts of the polity. Also, we would expect collective action in the American setting and, historically, in the more under-democratized parts of the American setting, to be weighted more toward non-institutional forms than would collective action in other settings. Currently we would expect U.S. social mobilization to be discouraged by its voting regulations and that challenger collective action to be more likely to take non-institutional forms. What is more, group-wise mobilization would be expected to be influenced by patterns of inclusion and exclusion.

Some historical evidence supports our contentions about the impact of democratic rules and practices on the levels of social mobilization. In the 1880s, as the Populist movement emerged, voter turnout in the South remained relatively high and opposition to the Democratic Party there could still win the vote of blacks and lower-class whites. In presidential elections from 1880 to 1892, voter turnout in the South was similar to that in the rest of the country (Kousser 1974:12). In contrast by the end of the century, disfranchisement was sectionwide, and only a minority of the potential electors voted - because in the intervening years southern Democrats enacted a variety of restrictive measures. These restrictive measures at first spread unevenly across the states. The Populist challenge appeared in the

South before and as voter restrictions were enacted. In 1887, before many of these restrictions were in place, the Populist movement spread from Texas across the former Confederacy (Goodwyn 1978:56-58), culminating in the 1892 electoral insurgency of the Populist Party. From 1892 to 1895 the movement's electoral mobilization proved more successful in those states where voter restriction had not yet taken hold (Kousser 1974:41). By the end of the century, as voting restrictions became solid across the South, the movement collapsed. In cross-state studies that control for other macro-social determinants of social mobilization and for region, moreover, 1930s American challengers, such as Huey Long's Share Our Wealth and the Townsend Movement were significantly influenced by the degree to which voting rights were extended (Amenta, Dunleavy and Bernstein 1994; Amenta and Zylan 1991).

Other evidence provides suggestive support for our hypotheses about the types of collective action. Cross-national studies using the World Values Survey, have shown significant variation across national settings between conventional and unconventional action (see Dalton 1988; Halman and Nevitte 1996). Although unconventional political participation is not the same as non-institutional interaction with the political system, evidence concerning unconventional action seems to work in the direction we suggest. Dalton (1988:65) finds that the "level of unconventional activity is generally highest in France and the United States," as compared to West Germany and Britain. Still, given the limitations of the survey, his study cannot control for other macro-social influences on the form of action.

The ways that democratic rights were distributed across U.S. groups also appears to have had an impact on the group-wise mobilization and political identities of challengers. American workers were granted the vote without having to contend for it as workers. Perhaps as a result they were less successfully politically mobilized as workers throughout the nineteenth century than were their European counterparts, who had to fight as a group to win the franchise (Katznelson 1981; Oestreicher 1988; Shefter 1986). By contrast, American women in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century (Skocpol 1992) and African Americans in the middle twentieth century (McAdam 1982) formed organizations based in part on their exclusion from the franchise. These groups organized themselves in part to gain or regain the franchise.

State Bureaucracies

Another set of state factors, more in the middle-range, concern the abilities to make policies and enforce them. Kitschelt (1986) refers to state policy bureaucracies as "implementation capacities," and suggests that they are relevant not to mobilization, but to the outcomes of protest. Kriesi (1995) argues that the more professional and coherent the bureaucracy the less

likely it will spur social mobilization. According to his conceptualization, states can be designated "weak" or "strong," with strong states, including professionalized bureaucracies, discouraging mobilization and weak states encouraging it. Yet it is unclear why bureaucracies without the capacity to implement policy would spur social mobilization, as they would minimize the chances of a movement achieving its goals. The hypothesis also implies that since domestic state bureaucracies across capitalist democracies have become more coherent, professional, and larger throughout the twentieth century, these developments would constitute increasing hindrances to social mobilization.

If strong bureaucracies increase the chances that challengers will win substantive gains, as Kitschelt (1986) suggests, we would argue that strong bureaucracies should spur movement mobilization. More important, however, because domestic bureaucracies vary in strength and form, they make some lines of future state action more likely than others. Domestic bureaucracies are typically launched with missions to provide services and relieve socially and politically defined problems, and those with careers in such bureaus are typically committed to their missions. For these reasons, a state's executive bureaucracy might promote challenges along the lines that bureaucracies are already working (Nagel and Olzak 1982:136137; Orloff and Skocpol 1984). Members of these bureaucracies may also aid challengers whose goals dovetail with the cause of the bureau, and the greater the administrative powers of the bureau, the more support they might be able to provide (Amenta and Zylan 1991). Hypothesis 9: An under-professionalized bureaucracy will discourage challengers, as it makes less likely the provision of collective benefits to them. Hypothesis 10: Coherent state bureaucracies with social policy missions will encourage challengers targeting those issues and encourage challengers to target those issues.

Like Kitschelt (1986), Kriesi (1995) estimates the postwar United States bureaucracy as "weak," along with Switzerland's and, to a lesser extent, Germany's. It is agreed that U.S. bureaucracies are more open to influence - less professional, more subject to political control, and with higher turnover rates - than their European counterparts. In addition, the United States and Switzerland score low on one key measure of policy-making abilities - the amount of the nation's income spent on social spending programs (Hicks and Misra 1993). Though comparatively weak and unprofessional, U.S. executive branches across the American governments have become more powerful and professional over time (Skowronek 1982), and state-level bureaucracies vary considerably among themselves. For these reasons, we would expect that U.S. bureaucracies probably discourage social mobilization overall and discourage social spending mobilizations as compared to current European state bureaucracies. All the same, their impact would likely be more variegated and depend on the coherence of bureaucracies in specific policy areas.

Exploring the implications of these hypotheses would require examining, categorizing, and comparing the extent, autonomy, and nature of state bureaucracies across time and place with the different possible mobilizations of the politically disadvantaged. Those tasks, unfortunately, are well beyond our abilities here. It should be noted, though, that our hypotheses are consistent with postwar European bureaucracies, coherent as they are, discouraging the sorts of "new" social movements examined by Kriesi (1995). The missions of these bureaucracies do not seem to favor the issues expressed by these movements.

There is also evidence for our claims across U.S. states in the 1930s. In some states social bureaucracies were well established by 1930. Industrial commissions, for instance, generally oversaw labor legislation and ran workmen's compensation. States with more powerful industrial commissions tended to have larger Townsend Movement mobilizations, despite the fact that other influences, such as the power of the labor movement, were controlled for (Amenta and Zylan 1991). Moreover, Walton (1992:293-294) argues that sustained and successful mobilization over water rights by Owens Valley, California residents could not occur until after the 1930s when coherent state agencies began to provide the tools for efficacious political action.

State Policies

We also argue that state policies and programs can encourage, discourage, shape, or transform challengers because policies themselves influence the future flow of collective benefits to the constituencies of challengers. The effects work in the following ways. Policies and programs developed prior to challenges can influence the formation and geographical pattern of national and international challenges. Moreover, an existing challenger may be encouraged inadvertently by programs - developed for other reasons - that benefit its followers. To achieve their own aims state actors and politicians may also devise public policy to promote challengers. State actors might do so to increase the power of bureaus in charge of such programs. Politicians might do so to increase their electoral prospects. New programs may also aid potential activists by freeing their time for movement work or by providing resources for movement organizations. Hypothesis 11: New programs aiding a challenger will help to sustain its mobilization, and new programs aiding a potential challenger will encourage its mobilization.

In addition, by designating officially sanctioned and legitimated beneficiaries, policies also help to define and redefine social groups. Hypothesis 12: Programs will influence forms of challengers by inducing a closer correspondence between programs and challengers. Thus, to the degree that policies are relatively inclusive they will likely lead to more inclusive challenges,

and policies that are fragmented will lead to more fragmented challenges.

Delineating the entire configuration of policies across time or countries and their relationships to specific challenges is a daunting task similar in scope to detailing the configuration of bureaucracies. All the same, U.S. public policies are probably on the whole relatively disadvantageous to politically underprivileged groups, especially workers and poor people. As mentioned, the United States spends less of its income on programs to redress inequality than most other capitalist democracies. Thus, mobilizations on these issues would be expected to be relatively muted. Moreover, American social policy tends to run on two tracks. "Welfare" programs designed explicitly to aid poor people are separated programmatically and ideologically from "social security" programs that support poorer people and the middle classes (Weir, Orloff and Skocpol 1988). For that reason these policies encourage more dispersed mobilizations, as groups focus on the one or the other of these lines of activity, but seldom both.

Some cross-national and historical evidence supports our hypotheses. Across capitalist democracies, labor movements have been able to better resist the recent capitalist initiatives to demobilize them where state policy supports a Ghent-type unemployment insurance system, one in which unions control unemployment funds (Western 1993). A number of policies of Franklin Roosevelt's Second New Deal, created partly in response to social mobilizations, also appear to have encouraged U.S. social mobilization afterwards. The Townsend Movement saw its greatest growth after the passage of the Social Security Act in 1935 (Amenta and Zylan 1991). Share Our Wealth also took off after the adoption of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) that year. The various labor policies of that Administration, notably the National Labor Relations Act of 1935, also spurred the further organization and collective action of labor (Skocpol 1980).

The "water wars" in California between communities in Owens Valley and Los Angeles (Walton 1992) began in earnest with the 1902 Reclamation Act, which provided for government participation in western water projects and established the Reclamation Service. Residents of Owens Valley organized around this act, hoping to influence the development of hydraulic power for their agricultural interests. In the wake of the National Environmental Protection Act and California's counterpart to it, Owens Valley's struggle with Los Angeles over water centered on action through the state courts "under the mantle of environmentalism" (Walton 1992:276, 304-305).

Other evidence from American history suggests that policies can help to transform the struggles and focus of challengers. The unemployed workers movement of the early 1930s was a wide-ranging assortment of groups and individuals connected to various political organizations and was in decline by 1935. By the late 1930s, after the adoption of the WPA, the movement

was confined almost exclusively to WPA workers (Valocchi 1990). In California, the Townsend Movement, which had dominated old-age politics since its inception in the middle 1930s, was replaced as the main old-age organization in late 1940s by a group consisting of those receiving Old-Age Assistance - the main form of aid to the aged in that decade (Pinner, Jacobs and Selznick 1959; Putnam 1970). The influence of this group faded as Old-Age Assistance was overshadowed by old-age insurance, or "social security." In turn, the American Association for Retired Persons mobilized beneficiaries of that program. Although there was no politically disadvantaged group demanding Aid to Dependent Children when it was created in 1935 (Cauthen and Amenta 1996), after a generation of operation the National Welfare Rights Organization mobilized the program's recipients to struggle to liberalize it (Piven and Cloward 1977).

Conclusion

Scholars of social movements have argued that states considered "weak" - "understood as decentralized, divided in authority, with direct democratic procedures, and with less powerful bureaucracies - spur social mobilization (Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi 1995; Kriesi et al. 1995). We suggest, however, that scholars need to go beyond the distinction between weak and strong states and instead examine different important aspects of states. Also, it is worth going beyond issues of overall mobilization to address more variegated issues about form of challenges. Indeed, many of the features of supposedly weak states may dampen movement mobilization; notably, polities with divided political authority seem to make it more difficult for the collective action of relatively excluded groups to succeed, because it is easier for members of the polity to block initiatives in such political systems. Moreover, if state bureaucracies are weak, in the sense of under-professionalized, they are open to the influence of members of the polity - probably to their advantage, given their greater access and resources. Although strong bureaucracies that oppose the missions of challengers are likely to dampen social mobilization, state bureaucracies with missions that are consistent with those of challengers are likely to encourage challengers.

More important, the social movement literature often fails to address key aspects of states - especially the degree and extent to which political processes are inspired by democratic principles and state policies. We argue that when large numbers of people cannot vote or meaningfully participate in an otherwise democratic political system they can be safely ignored by political leaders and state officials, thus dampening movement mobilization. Policies also matter. The more that policies support a challenging group, the greater the spur to mobilization - up to the point that the challenger's interests are realized.

States also influence the form of mobilization and often in ways different

from the literature suggests. A profusion of polities with authority to legislate, spend, and regulate - as in federal political systems - are likely to produce social mobilization that is varied and smaller in scale and scope. When many groups are excluded from electoral processes, challenger mobilization will be more likely to take non-institutional forms. Moreover, if groups are excluded from representation as groups, they are likely to mobilize politically in such a form to gain the franchise. What is more, winner-take-all electoral systems prevent challengers from forming political parties - an important means to realize state-related goals. In such circumstances, institutional action is likelier to take different forms, including lobbying and influencing elections. Specific policies can channel challengers. Disparities in the form, administration, and justifications of social spending policies may induce fragmented mobilizations in support of them and may have repercussions for the forms that new challengers might take.

Our hypotheses imply that the American state has an impact on challengers that differs from the conventional understandings. For the most part, other scholars have argued that the American state has typically encouraged the mobilization of challengers and assimilative or institutional forms of collective action. If one focuses on whether aspects of state support the collective action of challengers, however, the American state has likely been discouraging to challengers throughout its history. The many checks and balances across the American polity harm challengers' prospects by facilitating the ability of the politically powerful to veto new policies. The American experience with democratic rights, an important spur to the mobilization of the disadvantaged, has not been one of comparative advantage in the last century. In the twentieth century the United States has been a democratic laggard; even since the breakthroughs of the 1960s and 1970s, the United States remains somewhat democratically backward, as institutional restrictions on exercising the franchise limit the political voice of the relatively poor. The winner-take-all electoral system discourages the formation of new political parties. U.S. state bureaucracies have not been and are not as professionalized as their European counterparts and have controlled fewer resources. Probably they aid polity members more than they do challengers. Similarly, U.S. social policies have typically spent less and do not likely favor the mobilization of the politically disadvantaged.

The U.S. polity also has had significant influences on the form of challenger mobilization. The greater decentralization in the U.S. polity leads to more fragmented and locally based forms of action. American challengers are more likely both to think and act locally. The fragmentation of powers in the national polity also should promote a diversity of forms of action - focused on claims through courts as well as lobbying legislatures and bureaucracies. The winner-take-all electoral system most likely makes institutional action center more on influencing parties, legislators, courts, and bureaucracies rather than on forming and creating new parties. The existence of the initiative

in some states most likely makes American politics more centered on issues. Finally, the uneven extension of voting rights most likely influenced the group-wise formation of challengers - encouraging their development along racial and gender lines, rather than class ones.

It is worth theorizing further about the impact of state political institutions, processes, bureaucracies, and policies on social mobilization. One line of thinking that is likely to prove productive is the consideration of the potentially reciprocal impacts of state characteristics on the system of political representation (Jenkins and Klandermans 1995). Also needed is research to appraise claims. There have been a number of important small-N research projects on anti-nuclear mobilizations (Jasper 1990; Kitschelt 1986), unconventional political activity Dalton (1988), women's suffrage (Banaszak 1996), and new social movement mobilizations (Koopmans and Rucht 1995; Kriesi 1995). Further cross-national work of greater scope, however, will be needed to sort out the various influences of states on social movements, with greater controls over other macro-social influences on social mobilization. Attention is also needed to periods other than the current one, because of the great historical variation in state structures and activities over time (Tarrow 1994; Tilly 1986). Even case studies - the usual form in scholarship on challengers - would shed light on these hypotheses if data on them were collected systematically over time and across different polities.

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1. It should be noted that Kitschelt (1986) makes claims concerning only the form of mobilization and the impact of mobilization - not about overall mobilization. Moreover, Kitschelt generally sees the U.S. state as having "weak" implementation capacities, or the abilities to effect new policy, and thus U.S. social movements are less likely to have substantive impacts. We agree, but argue that the potential for a successful impact influences the forms and amount of mobilization.

2. With regard to variations in levels of mobilization, however, there exists little comparative research relevant to our arguments. For this reason, we conclude with suggestions of the direction research should take

to appraise hypothesis dealing with overall levels of social mobilization.

3. This is a problem that runs through most of the illustrative evidence we provide. Systematic evidence for this hypothesis and some others would, of course, require examining all major social mobilizations across countries and all potential determinants in a detailed way never attempted.

4. Recent studies analyzing the World Values Survey have compared Western nations on levels of unconventional participation (Halman and Nevitte 1996). Unfortunately, unconventional participation and social mobilization are not equivalent so this survey data cannot be used to compare overall levels of mobilization across nations. Respondents to the survey were asked "whether you have actually done any of these things, whether you might do it or would never, under any circumstances, do it: signing a petition, joining in boycotts, attending lawful demonstrations, joining unofficial strikes, occupying buildings or factories" (Halman and Nevitte 1996: appendix 8). Studies comparing protest (Gabriel 1996) or unconventional political participation (Heunks 1996) measures derived from this question do not compare actual levels of overall mobilization, but differences in values about protest and (potential) individual participation.

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