

89075438325



b89075438325a

Chapter 1

The Politics of Social Protest

J. Craig Jenkins and Bert Klandermans

Source: Jenkins and Klandermans
The Politics of Social Protest
 1995 U Minnesota Press

Surprisingly little attention has been paid to the interaction between social movements and the state. This is all the more surprising given the central importance of social movements as forces for political change in the contemporary world and the importance of the state in shaping political change. Whether we look at the interaction between social protesters and party politics in the United States or Western Europe or at the democratization struggles in Eastern Europe, China, or Latin America, the nature and development of social movements cannot be understood without reference to the central role of the state. As the institutionalized center for the legitimate monopoly on the means of violence, the state is the ultimate arbiter for the allocation of socially valued goods. The state is therefore simultaneously target, sponsor, and antagonist for social movements as well as the organizer of the political system and the arbiter of victory. As organizer of the political system, the state shapes the relationships between social movements and the institutionalized interest representation system. In the Western democracies, the central relationship is that between social movements and political parties and the governmental institutions that regulate the relationships between citizens and the state. Social movements that aim to alter social institutions and practices have to come into contact with the state, if only to consolidate their claims.

This volume brings the interaction between social movements and the state to center stage. Because it is primarily concerned with the politics of social protest movements in the Western democracies, it focuses on the four-way interaction between citizens, social movements, the political representation system, and the state. The primary focus is the three-way struggle between social movements, political parties, and the state, looking at the op-

opportunities that electoral politics present to social movements, the impact of social protest on political parties and electoral processes, and, finally, the implications that these relationships have for the modern democratic state. The volume traces the emergence of the modern social movement out of changes in the conception of political representation that occurred during the construction of the liberal democratic state in the nineteenth century through to its contemporary impact on the late-twentieth century state. Because movement-state relations cannot be fully understood except through broad-ranging comparative analysis, the essays range from nineteenth-century France to the left-libertarian or "new social movements" of Western Europe to contemporary protest in Israel, Peru, and the Western democracies to the post-communist transformation of Eastern Europe. A central theme woven throughout the volume is that *political opportunities* are central to the emergence and development of social movements and that these opportunities are primarily structured by the organization of the state, the cohesion and alignments among political elites, and the structure, ideology, and composition of political parties. In this sense, the state shapes the *conflict and alliance systems* that shape social movement emergence and development. At the same time, social movements are also agents of political change. They act upon these opportunities, and their actions in turn often help to generate new opportunities. Any thorough discussion of the state and social movements must focus on both sides of this relationship.

We propose as an organizing device for thinking about the interaction between social movements and the state a diamond scheme (Figure 1). In this scheme, we assume the existence of an institutionalized political representation system based on mass parties and interest associations. In other words, this scheme is most useful for mapping movement-state relations in the Western democracies. It would have to be modified radically to deal with nondemocratic contexts. In chapter 2, "Social Movements, Political Representation, and the State," we discuss how to revise this scheme to deal with nondemocracies.

The diamond outlines the different relations that need to be addressed in discussing movement-state relations in liberal democracies. The left side of the diamond (arrows *a* and *d*) refers to the relationship of citizens to the political representation system, chiefly mass parties and formal interest associations, and the state. This is the traditional subject matter of political science. Our primary emphasis will be on the center and right side of the diamond (arrows *b*, *c*, and *e*)—on the impact of social protest and movement efforts on the

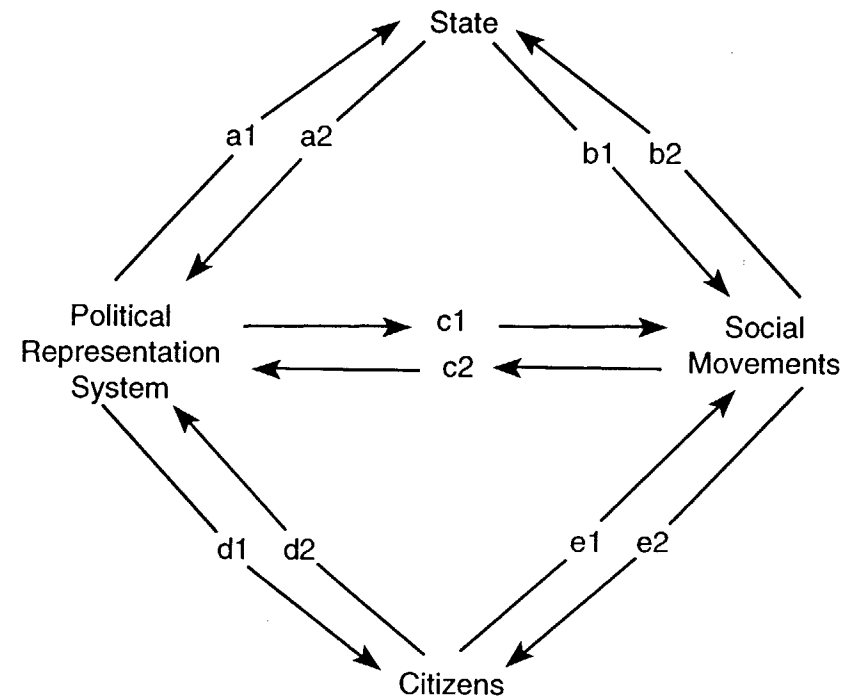


Figure 1. State/social movement relations

political system and the impact, in turn, of the political system back on social movements.

First, some definitions. By *state*, we mean the institutionalized system for claiming a legitimate monopoly over the means of violence over a specified territory. This ensures the ability to make and enforce binding decisions and thus places the state at the center of political conflicts. By *political representation system*, we mean the institutionalized set of organizations that claim to represent and aggregate the interests of various social interests. This places political parties, interest associations, and various social institutions claiming to represent broad constituencies at the center of the interface between the state and civil society. These groups have institutionalized access to centers of political decision making and are thus, in Charles Tilly's (1978) phrase, "polity members." By *social movement*, we mean a sustained series of interactions between the state and challenging groups (Tilly 1984). Social movements, then, constitute a potential rival to the political representation system and can play a major role in restructuring the relationship between the state and civil society. By speaking of *social protest*, we point to the collective action

of social movements that are attempting to alter the representation system, public policies, or the general relationships between citizens and the state. We refer to the *political system* as this entire complex of relations.

The key themes that concern us throughout this volume relate to various combinations of arrows in the diamond scheme. First and perhaps foremost, we are concerned with *political opportunities*, that is, the impact of the state and the political representation system on social movements (arrows *b1* and *c1* in the diamond). How do political opportunities shape the emergence and development of social movements? How are movement goals and tactics shaped by the ideology, strategies, and policy styles of state managers and party leaders? Has neocorporatism closed off the normal channels of political access, thus forcing movements into disorderly protest, or has it worked to regulate conflict, thus reducing the pressure for protest? Do state repression and other controls undermine movements or do they mobilize new supporters?

Second, we are concerned with the impact of social movements back on the state (arrow *b2*). In terms of direct movement-state relations, we are concerned with questions of the political goals of contemporary movements and their ability to alter state institutions. Are the "new social movements" oppositional in the classic sense, are they apolitical, as some critics aver, or are they pursuing a program of "self-limited radicalism" (Offe 1985b)? Are social movements central agents of political change? What, after all, do we mean by social movement "success"? Do we gauge this by looking at the specific goals and agendas of activists or at the impact of their actions? Building on the now classic scheme that William Gamson devised in his *Strategy of Social Protest* (1975), we look at questions of political access and agenda setting (or "acceptance") as well as specific policy gains (or "new benefits"). We also need to expand this framework to incorporate structural change in the state system itself as well as alterations in the political system as a whole.

Third, we deal with the impact of social movements on the political representation system (arrow *c2*). We know that social movements often generate the issues and ideas that political parties adopt and eventually introduce into public policy, but we know relatively little about how this process works. Does this vary on the basis of movement strategies, party orientations, and electoral coalitions? Does intense party competition or voter volatility condition this effect? A classic story is that of the social movement that finally "went to Washington" and became part of the political establishment. Does this facilitate movement success? What are the circumstances that facilitate political incorporation?

Fourth and finally, social movements can have indirect effects on the political system by shaping the attitudes and actions of citizens (arrows *e1* and *e2*). Here the question has to do with the ability of social movements to mobilize and alter citizen orientations. More than three decades ago, Rudolf Heberle (1951) argued that social movements were the primary crucible of new political identities, generating the new ideas and loyalties that eventually transform the political system. Some social movements become third parties while others permeate the existing parties, operating as "special interests" within party chambers. In either case, the central avenue is through altering the attitudes and actions of the average citizen. A related measure is the generation of new styles of political action or repertoires. Samuel Barnes and Max Kaase in their celebrated *Political Action* (1979) made the forceful point that social movements create the new action repertoires, thus altering the relations of citizens to the state and to the party system.

We have organized the essays in this volume into three major themes as defined by our diamond scheme. The first theme—the *origins of social protest*—examines how social protest develops and operates as a complement or an alternative to political parties and interest associations. In addition to and in competition with these institutionalized vehicles for representing political interests, social movements have emerged to create new identities and press ignored claims, thereby preventing political parties and interest associations from monopolizing the intermediary relationship between citizens and the state. The second theme—*political opportunities*—elaborates on the impact of the state and the electoral system on social movements. Social movements develop in a context defined by the state and the representation system, which afford opportunities for mobilization and set limits on the effectiveness of movement strategies. Social movements also operate in this context, setting in motion changes that often create new opportunities for further action. Hence opportunities both *exist* and are *made*. The third theme—*system transformations and outcomes*—investigates the impact of social movements on the state and the representation system. Here the primary concern is the ability of movements to bring about political and social change as well as to alter specific policies and governmental practices.

The essays in this book move beyond existing social movement theories by examining the role of states in social movement development. Although resource mobilization and new social movement theories saw social protest as inherently political and offered many useful ideas about the politics of social protest, they did not develop a comparative analysis of the relationships be-

tween states and social movements. Nor did they examine the interests and structures of the state itself. They also underestimated the political origins of social protest, resource mobilization theory by neglecting questions of ideology and consciousness and new social movement theory by overemphasizing the apolitical goals of contemporary protesters. By building on theories of the state, we begin at the center point of modern politics: the structure of power and the struggle of new groups and actors to secure a political voice.

Our discussions begin with an attempt by J. Craig Jenkins to develop an agenda and comparative framework for the analysis of movement-state interaction. He argues that discussions of the state ought to bear on the study of social protest because social protest is inherently a political act, because the state regulates the political environment within which protesters operate, and because social protest is, at least implicitly, a claim for political representation. Although traditionally the question of social movements has been secondary in the study of the state, Jenkins shows how dominant approaches to the study of the state have implicitly contained an approach to the study of social movements and their political impact. He also points to various refinements of state theory that need to be incorporated so that we can deal with the politics of social protest in authoritarian settings.

The discussion continues with the origins of protest. Social protest has traditionally been defined as an alternative to electoral action. Ronald Aminzade argues that this dichotomy is actually a historic product of political struggles in the nineteenth century over the concept of political representation. Drawing on a historical analysis of nineteenth-century France, he contrasts two modes of representation: a "mandate" model and a "trustee" model. Aminzade argues that the mandate model preceded the modern trustee conception and encouraged a fusion of protest and voting, demanding that representatives act at the behest of citizens. The trustee conception was a major foundation of the modern bourgeois republic, splitting protest from voting by requiring that citizens retire to the sidelines once the voting was over. Much later in the twentieth century this model gave rise to the "elite" or pluralist theory of liberal democracy in which direct voice and protest were regarded as dysfunctional to democratic rule. As we look at contemporary protests, this distinction poses in fresh terms the question of the legitimacy of different relationships between citizens and the state.

A second focus is the mainsprings of protest action. Karl-Dieter Opp, Steven Finkel, Edward Muller, Gadi Wolfsfeld, Henry Dietz, and Jerrold Green address the question, How is political ideology related to protest? Drawing on a rational choice theory, they compare the relationship between

political self-placement and protest potential in three contemporary democracies: West Germany, Israel, and Peru. Ideological incentives are critical to protest activism and, as the authors show, the configuration of ideological incentives varies significantly between these three polities. Supporting a variant of the "extremism" hypothesis that those at the ends of the political spectrum are more politically committed and therefore more likely to engage in "direct action," they find that rightists are as likely to protest as leftists in Israel and Peru, while the middle-of-the-roaders remain on the sidelines. Reflecting the post-World War II political reconstruction of West Germany and the various currents of social protest during the 1960s and 1970s, protest there is limited to those on the left of the political spectrum.

Michael Wallace and J. Craig Jenkins take up a similar set of questions in comparing social protest in eight Western democracies. In addition to looking at individual sources of protest, they also use the contrast between these democracies to identify the importance of political institutions in shaping protest. Drawing on the eight Western democracies originally studied by Barnes and Kaase (1979), they examine "new class," postindustrialism, and neocorporatism as images of the mainsprings of social protest. They conclude that the "new class" constitutes a significant source of protest but is overshadowed by the younger generation, men, and the more educated. Religiosity and, at least in predominantly Catholic countries where a confessional party has organized Catholic doctrine into the political system, Catholicism discourage protest. In the Anglo democracies, by contrast, Catholics constitute a dissident minority. In contrast with the idea of "apolitical protest" and the erosion of party identities, Wallace and Jenkins find that protest is strongly rooted in political identifications, especially ideological self-placement and left-party loyalties. Those who are loyal to leftist parties are consistently more supportive of protest. Reinforcing Barnes and Kaase's idea of "political activists," they find that those who are more active in conventional politics are also more active in protests. One of their most significant findings is that a rise in protest potential does not consistently give rise to actual protest. This relation is mediated by the political representation system. Liberal and neocorporatist states have comparable protest potentials, but the latter have experienced considerably less actual protest, indicating that the representation system is a significant constraint on actual protest.

Recent discussions of the political representation system have focused on the question of neocorporatism as a system of institutionalized bargaining between the state and associations of employers and workers. Is this a benign development that promises a more coherent response to social and economic

problems? Or does it auger a new form of controlled participation and political exclusion, possibly even more darkly a move toward state corporatism? In their early formulations, Philippe Schmitter (1983) and Gerhard Lehbruch (1984) emphasized the pacific effects of neocorporatism. Recent observers, however, have contended that it is a highly unstable system and that, by narrowing political access, neocorporate regimes have stirred new protest sentiments (F. Wilson 1990). Michael Nollert casts new light on this question, arguing that neocorporatist regimes are less likely than other regimes to experience protest, primarily as a result of their better economic performance. Distinguishing two dimensions of performance—economic growth and income inequality—he argues that the working and middle classes in neocorporatist systems have a material basis for their consent. A more centralized system of decision making coupled with informal bargaining relations helps consolidate this consent. Hence, in contrast to the neo-Marxists who contend that neocorporatism is a “class trick” and the political exclusion theorists who think it is oppressive, Nollert makes a strong case for seeing political stability as flowing from governmental performance.

Part III focuses on political opportunities and the interplay between protest movements and electoral politics. Building on the schemes advanced by Kitschelt (1986) and Tarrow (1989b), Hanspeter Kriesi argues that political opportunities are the central determinant of social movement development. Developing a scheme based on Kitschelt's ideas about the structure of state capacities and Tarrow's arguments about the configuration of power, he argues that the rules of the electoral system, the informal procedures of elites for dealing with outsiders, and the stance of the organized left (including both political parties and the organization and party ties of organized labor) have decisively shaped the political fortunes of the new social movements. These movements fared better in democracies with integrative elites, a unified left that was out of power, and pluralistic or religiously divided unions. They were more likely to adopt moderate goals and develop an independent constituency and program that ensured sustained mobilization. One of Kriesi's major innovations is distinguishing between the *formal institutions of the state*, which has been the primary focus of past work on political opportunities, and the *informal bargaining procedures of elites*, which shape the way in which elites respond to challengers. These in turn have historic roots in the development of the state and its relationships to various classes, especially the industrial working class. Adding to Kitschelt's (1986) earlier argument about the mixed success of movements in “weak” states, his ideas about the political style or informal procedures of elites in dealing with citizens helps

account for the procedural and substantive successes of the new social movements as well as their defeats.

Diarmuid Maguire develops similar arguments about the trajectory of the recent peace movements in Britain and Italy. Emphasizing the tensions that exist between protest and electoral mobilization, he argues that the British Labour Party in the 1980s represented a “catch-all” party par excellence that saw major electoral advantages in co-opting the peace movement. Following a logic of electoral competition, it adopted most of the movement program, but in the process siphoned off the enthusiasms of the movement and exposed it to the hazards of electoral politics. Labor defeat at the polls spelled movement disaster. In Italy, the Communist Party (PCI) has long dominated the left, adopting a tutelary stance toward social movements. It therefore treated the peace movement as a troublesome stepchild that had to be guided into correct channels. The movement adopted a “class conflict” model of opposition but failed to develop an independent constituency and, incorporated into the PCI's ideological program, was eventually blunted. This story follows the lines of David Meyer's (1990, 1993) work on the nuclear freeze movement in the United States. A permeable Democratic Party made it possible for the freeze to set the agenda but, once it was absorbed, it could not shape the actual policy process.

A persistent theme has been the political channeling of movements by the party system. In their analysis of the left-libertarian or “new” social movements in Italy and West Germany, Donatella della Porta and Dieter Rucht argue that the central factor regulating movement development is the supportive or alienating stance of the dominant left party. They broaden the focus to deal with all four of the major new social movements: the student movement, the women's movement, environmentalism, and the new peace movement. Highlighting the shifts in ideology and action, they argue that the central factor was the stance of the major left party. The more confrontational or alienating this left party toward the new movements, the more radical the movements. Movement goals, then, are not fixed by the interests or ideas of supporters but rather are politically emergent or “made” by the interaction between social movements and their political environment. Della Porta and Rucht also build on Bert Klandermans's (1990) distinction between the alliance systems and the conflict systems. Social movements simultaneously confront an environment of potential allies (such as left parties) and opponents (or the conflict system). The movements' goals, tactics, and eventual successes are largely shaped by this complex environment. Della Porta and Rucht also show striking parallels between the movements in these different

countries, anchored together by international diffusion of tactics and goals and a common set of international threats. In contrast to Kriesi, these authors contend that the governmental power of the left party is irrelevant. Their argument, in a nutshell, is: if the institutionalized left decides to promote change, it can facilitate a reformist challenge that eventually enjoys modest success.

Part IV centers on the outcomes of social movements, especially their effects on the state and the political representation system. We begin by looking at a broad range of changes that constitute movement success. Paul Burstein, Rachel Einwohner, and Jocelyn Hollander outline a bargaining perspective that emphasizes that when a movement's target is dependent on the movement, the target is willing to concede movement gains. They distinguish six types of movement success: acceptance, agenda access, policy victories, output response (or satisfying the grievances of movement activists), and structural changes. Past work has dealt primarily with only two of these dimensions, access and policy changes, and virtually ignored output response and structural change. Although they largely endorse Gamson's (1975) argument about the virtues of "thinking small," they also argue that we should include broader measures of success that better reflect the aims of movement activists. Ultimately, success is proportional to the dependence of targets on movement activists and thus the political exchanges into which movements can enter.

The message is that movement success is largely a product of the political environment, especially the power and resources of political parties. As a result, social movements often have a hands-off approach toward parties, viewing them with skeptical eyes as sources of entangling alliances. Russell Dalton explores the partisan orientations of the environmental movements of the ten members of the European Community. He identifies three distinct strategies: alliance with one of the existing parties, a third-party strategy, and an antipartisan stance. In general, he finds that the environmental leaders have followed an antipartisan stance. Despite strong leftist leanings, they view partisan alliances as blunting their effectiveness by tying them too closely to the fortunes of particular parties. At the same time, they also maintain strong informal relations with party leaders, typically those of the left-of-center parties. Antipartisanship strengthens their bargaining position, making them appear to be independent and thus to have access regardless of who is in power. In general, environmentalism, like most of the new movement issues, appears to reinforce long-standing trends toward a more fluid, issue-based politics.

Finally, we look at the most profound type of movement-initiated changes,

namely, the transformation of political systems. Recent analyses of democratic transitions have typically treated movements as secondary, focusing instead on elite negotiations over a "democratic pact," the economic conditions for "class compromise," or the role of international crisis and intervention. Bronislaw Misztal and J. Craig Jenkins draw our attention to the differential role of protest in the postcommunist transitions. Comparing Poland and Hungary, they argue that protest was more central in Poland, that this stemmed from features of the Polish communist state, and that this protest wave left behind a distinctive political legacy, namely, hyperpoliticization and a weak political center. Although both communist states confronted identical problems—economic crisis, weak legitimacy and popular unrest, and loss of Soviet protection—the Polish state was more politically vulnerable. Private agriculture and an autonomous intelligentsia and church created havens for dissidence that overwhelmed the state. The Hungarian state was stronger but, in an ironic twist of fate, launched a "second economy" that created a new petite bourgeoisie that eventually became oppositional. The transition was driven more by the loss of Soviet protection and, as a result, the postcommunist regime was stronger. Although their skepticism about the long-term prospects for Polish democracy may not prove to be warranted, Misztal and Jenkins make a convincing case that the "movementization" of Polish politics has not been a happy fate.