States, Parties, and Social Movements

Edited by

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Introduction

BRIDGING INSTITUTIONALIZED AND NONINSTITUTIONALIZED POLITICS

Jack A. Goldstone

Some years ago, Craig Jenkins and Bert Klandermans (1995, p. 3) stated that "Surprisingly little attention has been paid to the interaction between social movements and the state." If that statement was at all valid then, it certainly is no longer valid now. The last half-decade has seen an enormous outpouring of work on the mutual influences between social movements and the state, ranging over such topics as framing protest issues (Gamson and Meyer 1996), repression (Kurzman 1996; Rasler 1996), movement outcomes (Dalton 1995; Misztal and Jenkins 1995), and, most commonly, political opportunity structures (Kriesi 1995; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; Tarrow 1996).

Nonetheless, there has been a persistent tendency to see this interaction as distinct from normal institutionalized politics occurring through voting, lobbying, political parties, legislatures, courts, and elected leaders. As Jenkins and Klandermans state this distinction: "[S]ocial movements... constitute a potential rival to the political representation system" (1995, p. 5). This separation of movement politics from institutionalized politics was concretized in Charles Tilly's (1978) enormously influential schema presenting social movements as "challengers" seeking to enter the institutionalized world of "polity members" who have routinized access to the levers of power. It was strongly reinforced by William Gamson's (1990) depiction of social movements as "outsider" groups whose challenges succeed, in one sense, as such groups become recognized actors in institutional politics. As Mary Fainsod Katzenstein (1998, p. 195) expressed this view: "Students of social movements commonly associate institutionalization with demobilization.... Social movements... are necessarily extrainstitutional."

One obvious conclusion of this view is that as social movement actors gain institutionalized access to the political system, we expect that protest action

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by such actors would (and indeed, normatively *should*) fade away. Pereira et al. (1993, p. 4) argue that "if reforms are to proceed under democratic conditions, distributional conflicts must be institutionalized. All groups must channel their demands through the democratic institutions and abjure other tactics." In other words, protest is for outsiders and opponents of the system; normal citizens seeking policy changes or social reforms should stick to supporting political parties and candidates and should use the legal system, petitions, and lobbying to pursue their goals.

The essays in this book advance a different claim, namely, that social movements constitute an essential element of normal politics in modern societies, and that there is only a fuzzy and permeable boundary between institutionalized and noninstitutionalized politics. To be sure, there are distinctly different behaviors at the extreme ends of the spectrum of institutional and noninstitutional politics. Elections, legislative votes, and court decisions are quite different in their conduct and content from protest marches, demonstrations, or boycotts. Yet just as analysts of social movements have come to realize that they cannot study movements independently of their political context, including the operations of normal political institutions, we maintain that the reverse is also true. To restate a claim first advanced by Rudolph Heberle (1951) a half-century ago and increasingly voiced by social movement scholars today (Burstein 1998b, 1999; Clemens 1997; Tarrow 1998b), we believe that one cannot understand the normal, institutionalized workings of courts, legislatures, executives, or parties without understanding their intimate and ongoing shaping by social movements. Indeed, as the essays in this volume demonstrate, state institutions and parties are interpenetrated by social movements, often developing out of movements, in response to movements, or in close association with movements.

Meyer and Tarrow (1998a) have made the claim that Western democracies are moving toward becoming "movement societies," in which social movements have become so routine, so institutionalized (through permits for demonstrations and referendums by petition), that they are now part of normal politics. We would agree with this but go further. Social movements are not merely another forum for or method of political expression, routinized alongside courts, parties, legislatures, and elections. Rather, social movements have become part of the environment and social structures that shape and give rise to parties, courts, legislatures, and elections. Moreover, this is true not only in established Western democracies but also, as the essays by Jorge Cadena-Roa, John K. Glenn, and Manali Desai in this

volume demonstrate, it is even true in emerging democracies, such as those of Mexico and Eastern Europe, and in non-Western societies such as India.

Indeed, to the extent that democratic institutions are spreading in the world today, this is not merely an adaptation or appropriation of institutions by political elites; it is instead a response to mass social movements seeking democratization as a goal (Markoff 1996; Valenzuela 1989). The normal story of the development of social movements is that they became part of normal politics in response to greater citizenship rights and the development of political party systems in Western democracies (Koopmans 1995; Tilly 1984). Today, the reverse seems to be true: In Eastern Europe, Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia, citizenship rights and political party systems are developing out of social movements.

Inside or Outside? Social Movements and Institutionalized Politics

Prior to the 1980s, prevailing images of social movement actors were that they were outsiders. In the words of Jenkins (1995, p. 15), they were "actors who are excluded or marginalized in the political order." Recognition of the role played by the middle class, by intellectual and professional elites, and by students in the so-called "new" social movements – which focused on health, the environment, and peace, among other issues – somewhat changed this view of participants in social movements, but scholars still saw movements as acting mainly outside of institutionalized politics, emerging only for intermittent rounds of conflict with established institutions and authorities (Melucci 1989). Yet empirical research has repeatedly shown that the actors, the fates, and the structures of political parties and social movements are closely intertwined.

Since the Republican movement in nineteenth-century France (Aminzade 1995), the same individuals have often been both social movement activists and political candidates. In the United States, presidential candidate Ralph Nader used a third-party challenge in 2000 to extend his consumerist/environmentalist movement, while in Europe, former environmentalist activists have become members of the German parliament and even ministers as politicians of the Green Party. Gay political activists have run for local offices, and leaders of the movement for research on acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) have taken seats on government regulatory bodies (Epstein 1996). The same individuals often give their time and money to both social movements and conventional party campaigns (Dalton 1995; Rucht 1991). As Meyer and Tarrow (1998a, p. 7) explain,

"participation in protest activity has not come at the expense of other forms of participation. . . . People who protest are more, not less, likely to vote and engage in the whole range of conventional citizen politics."

Not only persons but also organizations frequently engage in both protest and conventional political actions. Kriesi et al. (1995, pp. 152ff) point out that social movement organizations sometimes act like protest groups, organizing protest actions, while at other times they act like normal lobbies, seeking to provide information and advice to officials, and at still other times they act like parties or party auxiliaries, helping to get out the vote for particular candidates.

Indeed, in the United States and Western Europe, political parties and social movements have become overlapping, mutually dependent actors in shaping politics, to the point where even long-established political parties welcome social movement support and often rely specifically on their association with social movements in order to win elections, as with the U.S. Republican Party and the religious right (Green, Guth, and Wilcox 1998). Conversely, many social movements can barely exist and certainly not succeed without sponsorship from institutionalized political parties (Jenkins 1985). For example, Maguire (1995) shows how both the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and the Italian peace movement depended on support from established parties. CND initially grew and seemed likely to gain success when the Labour Party supported it; yet as soon as Labour decided that CND was not in its interest and turned against the movement, its chances for success dropped to zero and its support dried up. In Italy, the peace movement "could emerge only with PCI [Italian Communist Party] support, and it was organizationally and financially dependent on the party" (Maguire 1995, p. 225).

The stance taken by institutionalized parties toward social movement issues often determines the approach and fate of social movements (della Porta and Rucht 1995; Kriesi 1995); in return, the support or lack of support given by social movements to political parties can determine the latters' electoral success (Dalton and Kuechler 1990; Koopmans 1995; Lo 1990). Even at the local level, as the essay in this volume by Heidi J. Swarts shows, elected city councils and mayors rely on guidance from social movements to set their agenda and provide information for decision making, while at the national level, as shown by Nella van Dyke's essay, cycles of protest and cycles of electoral change seem to be remarkably synchronized.

This overlap and interpenetration of social movement actors and actions with conventional political participation and political parties is not

something new, nor is it limited to established Western democracies. In Europe, all of the major labor movements of the nineteenth century worked simultaneously to build unions for organizing protest and to build labor parties for organizing voting and electing representatives. In the United States in the 1930s, the Roosevelt welfare program was advanced by the Democratic Party in conjunction with labor-based and reformist social movements, which meshed protest and conventional political mobilization (Amenta 1998; Cloward and Piven 1999; Piven and Cloward 1979), leaving a long-term legacy of active participation of the labor movement in Democratic Party politics. On the right, Nazism began as a social movement but triumphed as a political party (Brustein 1996).

Going further back in time, in the United States all of the major nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century social movements that spawned social movement organizations – the American Anti-Slavery Society, the Farmers' Alliance, and the Anti-Saloon League – also spun off political parties that ran candidates in local and national elections: the Free Soil, Populist, and Prohibition parties, respectively. The fate of the movements was intimately tied to the fates of those parties and vice versa: The Free Soil Party later developed into the Republican Party of Abraham Lincoln, who eventually brought success to the abolitionist cause. The Populist Party polled twenty-two electoral votes in 1892, elected several governors and members of Congress, and later fused with the Democratic Party; the Democrats' defeat in William Jennings Bryan's 1896 campaign then brought the collapse of one of the most widespread and challenging protest movements in the United States since the Civil War. Although the Prohibition Party never was a significant player in national elections, the Anti-Saloon League and the Women's Christian Temperance Union eventually succeeded by embracing normal politics at the state level, namely, by leading referendum campaigns for dry laws in numerous states, which provided the foundation for national prohibition. The fates of major political parties were thus closely tied to the social movements that integrated with them. Of the major pre–World War I social movements, only the women's suffrage movement remained largely uninvolved in institutionalized political campaigns and party organizations.[1]

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[1] Women's suffrage movements did, in fact, engage in initiative drives in a few states, but these were the exceptions in what were primarily campaigns of lobbying and protest (Banaszak 1998; Costain 1998).

Outside the United States, we find that social movement activists and political party organization again overlap, even in the earliest emergence of democratic party institutions. Jan Kubik (1998) found that among four Eastern European nations that recently developed democratic institutions, namely, Poland, the former East Germany, Hungary, and Slovakia, democratic participation and protest activity were not alternatives, but rather complements, that rose and fell together. Those states that had the most active political party participation – Poland and East Germany – also had the most protest. In Russia, the activists of the Democratic Russia Party, which successfully backed Boris Yeltsin in his challenge to the Communist Party, were recruited from among dissident leaders of the human rights movement and from among environmental activists who had been among the first organizers of social movements in the former Soviet Union (Brovkin 1990). And in South Africa, the politics of the now democratically elected ruling African National Congress bear the indelible marks of that party's origins in the violent struggle of protest against apartheid (Seidman 2001).

Why have many scholars come to treat protest not merely as one aspect of social movement activity, but as the normal or primary mode of action for social movements and quite separate from institutionalized political actions? I think it may be because social movement theory as it emerged in the 1950s and 1960s lost sight of the essential complementarity of both social protest and electoral politics by focusing on somewhat peculiar movements, namely, movements in democratic societies that mainly involved people who were legally debarred from voting. Black civil rights and New Left student movements (before the voting age was lowered to eighteen) could draw a fairly clean line between normal political activity (voting, running for office) and protest activity (association, demonstration, protest) because *for those groups* only the latter was viable.

In addition, New Left and Black Power groups also often self-identified with more revolutionary movements (with such anticapitalist heroes as Che Guevarra and Fidel Castro) that were clearly outside of and opposed to the establishment. It is certainly true that for many protest movements, the question of self-identification sometimes involves a decided stance as "outside of" and "opposing" established parties and political systems precisely to avoid the taint of cooptation or excessive compromise. However, social scientists should not treat these strategic or tactical positionings by movement actors as if they represented *inherent* characteristics of movement activity. In fact, as this volume makes clear, social movements' stance

of alliance with, or opposition to, conventional political parties and officials is a pivot of multiple possibilities and shows frequent shifts.

The complementarity of protest and conventional political action (lobbying, participation in election campaigns, voting) suggests that studies of the effectiveness of *protest* (Gamson 1990) in terms of the characteristics of protest groups may have been wrongly conceived. Rather, it may be the ability of groups to combine *both* protest *and* conventional tactics for influencing government actors that best conduces to movement success (Andrews 2001; Cress and Snow 2000).[2]

Moreover, the temporal contrast that most researchers drew was between the protest cycle of the 1960s and 1970s and the relatively quiescent trough of protest activity in the immediate post–World War II period of the late 1940s and 1950s (Kriesi et al. 1995; Rucht 1998). The earlier period was seen as representing conventional politics, while the 1960s cycle was viewed as "normal" protest. The somewhat different character of earlier protest cycles, such as the labor protests of the 1930s (Piven and Cloward 1979) or the middle-class movements of the nineteenth century referred to earlier, such as abolitionism and prohibition (Calhoun 1995), were overlooked. The implicit assumption was that once those groups leading the 1960s protest cycle succeeded and were incorporated into the polity – for example, given the right to full political participation – they would use that standing to influence policy by conventional politics, and social movements would fade or continue to be drawn from the excluded.

Yet it has not turned out that way at all. The women's movement, the student left (which focused on international peace, antiapartheid efforts, cultural diversity on campus, and other issues), and the civil rights movement continued to use protest tactics in conjunction with normal political processes to seek their agendas, now expanded beyond mere access to voting to include a variety of issues of fairness (economic as well as political) and welfare (Koopmans 1995; Rucht 1998). Their repertoire of contentious action did not shift from protest to politics; rather, it expanded to include both. "New" social movements such as the environmental movement and the antiabortion movement, which never had formally disenfranchised actors, from their inception pursued and to this day pursue a variety of protest,

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[2] Andrews (2001) points out that even for the civil rights movement in Mississippi, "Local movements used a variety of conventional tactics, but they did not abandon the politics of protest.... Rather, movements were most influential when they built local organizations that allowed for an oscillation between mass-based tactics and routine negotiation with agency officials" (p. 89).

associational, and political party actions all aimed at making state policies conform to their goals (Costain and Lester 1998).

The reasons for this close ongoing relationship between protest and institutionalized politics have become more clear from Charles Tilly's pathbreaking explorations of the emergence of social movement activity in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Tilly 1995; Tilly and Wood in press). Social protest repertoires emerged in England at roughly the same time as repertoires for influencing elections to Parliament, and with the same purpose – to influence the outcomes of Parliament's deliberations. This was not a coincidence but represented a fundamental evolution in the nature of politics: *Both* democratization *and* social movements built on the same basic principle, that ordinary people are politically worthy of consultation. Both protests and normal electioneering seek to influence the decisions of representative bodies by presenting to the public and to those bodies the degree of popular support behind particular goals (Burstein 1999). Social movement activity and conventional political activity are different but parallel approaches to influencing political outcomes, often drawing on the same actors, targeting the same bodies, and seeking the same goals.

Social protest and routine political participation are complementary in several ways. First, institutional politics, for most ordinary people, is a highly intermittent process, focusing on electoral cycles. Protest and associational actions can go on throughout the seasons and throughout the years. Second, most conventional political participation only allows a fairly crude expression of choices – one votes for or against a candidate or party that may have a wide variety of positions. Protest and associational actions can focus on particular issues, giving greater specificity to actions; indeed, protests can shape party behavior in this respect, as Elisabeth Clemens (1997) has shown for the role of protest in making parties more responsive to specific social groups and their claims. This is not always the case; anticommunist or prodemocratic movements have very broad goals, while conventional referendum campaigns or lawsuits are often very issue-specific. However, in general, protest actions allow a degree of focus that is often difficult for ordinary citizens to attain in routine voting and political party participation.

Third, protest and associational actions offer an ongoing method to refine and reinforce the results of conventional elections (Imig 1998). Left movements may protest more when a rightist government is in power (and vice versa) to keep their agenda in view or to moderate the actions of the new government; in other cases, left movements may protest more when a

leftist movement is in power (and vice versa) to push that government to make good on campaign promises and honor its commitments. The essay by Nella Van Dyke in this volume gives evidence of both processes operating in the United States, interestingly in different ways at the national and state levels of governance.

Fourth, social movements, not just parties, can affect the *outcome* of institutionalized electoral contests. Movements can affect elections not only by mobilizing their supporters to vote and support a particular party, but also by increasing the salience of issues that are identified with particular parties or politicians (Burstein 1999, p. 15). Thus, the U.S. civil rights movement not only mobilized blacks to vote Democratic in northern states where Democrats had a thin margin in state elections; by dramatizing the injustices of segregation and raising the salience of civil rights issues, the movement also shifted the support given to antisegregation parties and politicians across the nation.

To sum up, there is no reason to expect that protest and conventional political action should be substitutes, with groups abandoning the former as they become able to use the latter. While some groups may, at different times, be more "in," in the sense of being more aligned and integrated with the institutional authorities, while other groups are more "out," there is neither a simple qualitative split nor a "once and for all" crossing of some distinct line separating challengers from insiders. It is more accurate to think of a continuum of alignment and influence, with some groups having very little access and influence through conventional politics, others having somewhat more, and still others quite a lot; but groups may move up and down this continuum fairly quickly, depending on shifts in state and party alignments. Protest may sometimes be a means of moving upward along the continuum, or a response to movement downward, or even an option that becomes easier and more available as institutionalized access increases (Meyer and Tarrow 1998a). The dynamics of protest thus have a complex and contingent relationship to a group's integration into institutionalized politics. The notion that there are in-groups and out-groups, and that the latter engage in protests while the former engage in politics, is a caricature with little relation to reality.

Protest actions have certain advantages over and complementarities with conventional political action that make protest both an alternative and a valuable supplement to the latter. Indeed, one would expect, and we generally find, that as societies gain and extend their institutionalized political participation through parties and voting, they *also* extend their institutionalized

repertoires of, and participation in, social movements and political protests. Both voting and social protest are avenues of political action that open up to ordinary people with the advance of democratization.

This still leaves the puzzle of why democratic social movements have, in recent years, been a major factor in nondemocratic countries (Markoff 1996), at least since the Gandhi-led independence movement in India in the 1940s. I believe this is rightly characterized as one of the impacts of globalization (Meyer et al. 1997). When expectations that democratic rights are a natural entitlement of adults spread (as they are now spreading to the developing world, just as they spread from England to France and thence to Europe and Asia in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries), that encourages people both to protest and to seek democracy; both efforts are rooted in the belief that the actions and desires of ordinary people should count and will be seen by the world (if not by their current regime) as worthy of support.

Moreover, if the spread of national democracies is the natural setting for the development of new repertoires of social protest and movement organizations, it should not be surprising that the international spread of democratic beliefs and norms alongside the growth of international organizations and multinational associations and agreements should be fertile ground for the development of new international organizations seeking to influence those organizations and associations, such as the international advocacy organizations studied by Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink (1998). Such advocacy organizations, focusing on issues such as human rights, environmental protection, and promoting democracy, typically draw on experts and focus on lobbying, party building, and other conventional political activity (Wapner 1995). Yet such groups have developed alongside the more contentious protest actions organized at such sites as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund meetings. Again, even as political activity extends to new globalized arenas and issues, we find the same close interweaving of institutional and social protest actions as complementary approaches to influencing the outcomes of deliberative and policymaking bodies.

Appreciation of the complex dynamics of protest and institutional politics also calls for new reflections on the role of violence. The simple dichotomy of in-groups and out-groups provided a simple theory of the role of violence in protest: Out-groups would be both the target and the source of the most violence; as groups gained more access to institutionalized politics, the level of violence they needed to employ to gain attention, or that would

be deployed against them, should decrease. Yet this has been only partially true. Studies of protest and repression have long recognized that groups with virtually no resources and no access to institutionalized politics have little means for effective disruption or violence and no defenses against repression. Groups with no access are thus as unlikely to engage in sustained protest actions as groups with very high access. The relationship between political access and political violence is therefore generally considered to be curvilinear, with more violent protests in states with intermediate levels of repression and political access (Muller 1985; Weede 1987).

However, even this simple curvilinear scheme does not cover temporal patterns that are also important. When does a state decide that a protest group is a threat requiring repression? Does it depend on the size of the group, its intensity of protest, its level of violence? The essay in this volume by David Cunningham suggests that none of these is a solid guide to government repression (see also Davenport 2000). Studies of revolution and rebellion have shown that it is often not groups that were most distant from institutionalized political access, but those groups that had made considerable gains in institutional power and then were suddenly excluded, or that had acquired considerable economic power and felt entitled to a greater political role, that produced the most violent or revolutionary mobilization (Goldstone 1991; Goodwin 2001; Walton 1984). In the U.S. civil rights movement, popular violence by blacks increased most rapidly *after* initial gains in civil rights legislation were made, as it became clear that even those victories in gaining institutionalized recognition and participation rights were not going to yield much immediate economic benefit or relief from residential, work, and other forms of discrimination (McAdam 1982). The U.S. labor movement suffered exceptional violence from employers in the late nineteenth century precisely as it began to gain unusual success in broad-based mobilization (Voss 1993). Indeed, as the essay in this volume by Joseph Luders demonstrates, in a lesson clear from Voss's work on U.S. labor conflicts, violence is sometimes a deliberate product of governments pitting different groups against each other, or simply failing to intervene to impose order amid group conflicts, rather than a matter of out-groups facing overt state repression or choosing violent methods of protest.

The wall that once separated studies of social movements from the study of institutionalized politics is now crumbling under a barrage of new findings and criticism. Leading social movement scholars now take it for granted that we must challenge the boundary between institutionalized and noninstitutionalized politics (Costain and McFarland 1998; McAdam,