The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements

Edited by

David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi

Blackwell Publishing

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Acknowledgments

The prospect of editing a compilation of original essays on some substantive field of inquiry almost always seems to be a reasonably appealing undertaking when considered a number of years in advance of the recommended date of completion. After all, the editor only has to identify a set of topics for discussion, enlist one or more authorities on the topics to write original essays, provide some substantive feedback on each of the original drafts, and then assemble the finals drafts and ship them off to the publisher. Not a particularly onerous set of tasks, right? Perhaps not when viewed temporally from a distance. But as anyone who has ever taken on such a task knows, the reality of doing it typically turns out to be much more challenging than originally anticipated. Not only is there usually insufficient space to cover all of the topics relevant to the broader area of research, but it is rarely possible to include as authors all of the accomplished scholars in the area. Thus, decisions have to be made about coverage and authorship. Moreover, once these matters have been settled, there is the challenge of coaxing the targeted authors to write the first drafts of the designated chapters within a limited span of time. And finally, there is the seemingly endless task of badgering the authors to revise their chapters in accordance with the reviewers' substantive suggestions, which may be quite extensive, and to submit their revised drafts in a timely manner.

Not surprisingly to those who have traveled this road before, we experienced all of these challenges in editing this volume, with some being much more time-consuming than initially anticipated. A case in point was the review process. At least two of us, and sometimes all three, reviewed each of the contributions, and there was no hesitancy in calling for extensive changes, both in coverage and organization. As a consequence, our reviews ranged from a minimum of two pages to as many as eight pages, with a few insisting on an almost completely new draft as a condition of continued inclusion.

Such editorial challenges notwithstanding, we prevailed. And we did so not only because of our belief in the utility of the volume for scholars and students of social

movements, but also because of the commitment and assistance of a number of individuals and institutions, to whom we owe a measure of gratitude. Foremost among the individuals are the chapter authors themselves, most of whom found the idea of the volume to be as important as we did. Obviously, if they had not stuck with us, tolerating our frequent badgering and coming through in the end, this volume would not have seen the light of day.

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David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi

Part I

Introduction

1

Mapping the Terrain

David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi

Social movements are one of the principal social forms through which collectivities give voice to their grievances and concerns about the rights, welfare, and well-being of themselves and others by engaging in various types of collective action, such as protesting in the streets, that dramatize those grievances and concerns and demand that something be done about them. Although there are other more institutionalized and publicly less conspicuous venues in which collectivities can express their grievances and concerns, particularly in democratic societies, social movements have long functioned as an important vehicle for articulating and pressing a collectivity's interests and claims. Indeed, it is arguable that an understanding of many of the most significant developments and changes throughout human history – such as the ascendance of Christianity, the Reformation, and the French, American, and Russian revolutions – are partly contingent on an understanding of the workings and influence of social movements, and this is especially so during the past several centuries. In this regard, it is interesting to note that *Time* magazine's December 31, 1999, centennial issue (McGeary 1999) included Mohandas Gandhi, the inspirational leader of one the more consequential movements of the past century, among its three major candidates for the person of the century. Why Gandhi? Because "(h)e stamped his ideas on history, igniting three of the century's great revolutions – against colonialism, racism, violence. His concept of nonviolent resistance liberated one nation and sped the end of colonial empires around the world. His marches and fasts fired the imagination of oppressed people everywhere" (1999: 123). And "his strategy of nonviolence has spawned generations of spiritual heirs around the world" (1999: 127), including Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez, Lech Walesa, Benigno Aquino Jr., and Nelson Mandela – all erstwhile, internationally prominent leaders of a major, consequential social movement in their respective homelands.

While one might quibble with *Time's* estimation of Gandhi's influence, the more important point is that some of the major events and figures of the past century, as well as earlier, are bound up with social movements. And that is particularly true

today, as social movements and the activities with which they are associated have become an increasingly conspicuous feature of the social landscape. Indeed, rarely does a day go by in which a major daily newspaper does not refer to social movement activity in relation to one or more of the hotly contested issues of our time: abortion, animal rights, civil rights, human rights, democratization, environmental protection, family values, gay/lesbian rights, gender equality, governmental intrusion and overreach, gun control, immigration, labor and management conflict, nuclear weapons, religious freedom, terrorism, war, world poverty, and so on. In fact, it is difficult to think of major national or international social issues in which social movements and related collective action events are not involved on one or both sides of the issues. Of course, not all social movements speak directly to or play a significant role in relation to major national or international issues, as some are primarily local in terms of the scope and target of their actions. Examples include ordinary worshipers demonstrating against the Church hierarchy in scattered parishes around Italy; a public gathering of placard-carrying citizens protesting the removal of scenic *Benjamin ficus* trees in a California beach community; a series of neighborhood, "not in my backyard" (NIMBY) mobilizations protesting the proposed relocation of the Salvation Army shelter in Austin, Texas; squatters occupying apartment buildings in Amsterdam and Berlin; local youth mobilizing for a "free" cultural space in Zurich; and a Christmas Eve march of the homeless, carrying banners proclaiming "Still No Room at the Inn," through the streets of Tucson, Arizona, and their subsequent two-week encampment on the front lawn of the county building. In addition to being local in terms of their constituents and targets, such movements typically go unnoticed beyond the local context because they operate beneath the radar of the national and international media. Nonetheless, such local movement activity probably occurs much more frequently than the large-scale protest events that are more likely to capture the media's attention.

Because of such observations and considerations, it might be argued that we live in a "movement society" (Meyer and Tarrow 1998), and perhaps even in a movement world. In the preface to the reissue of his highly regarded historical account of the people, ideas, and events that shaped the New Left in the 1960s, titled *Democracy Is in the Streets*, James Miller (1994) ponders the legacy of that period, and concludes that perhaps its most enduring contributions were cultural. Maybe so, but only insofar as the cultural includes models for political participation and action. Why? Because whatever the significant consequences of the 1960s, certainly one of the most important was that the movements of that period pushed open the doors to the streets wider than ever before as a major venue for aggrieved citizens to press their claims. And large numbers of citizens have been "takin' it to the streets" ever since in the US and elsewhere to express their collective views on all kinds of issues.[1] Citing World Values Survey Data, Norris (2002: 200) shows that in 17 out of 22 countries, the percentage of respondents reporting participation in demonstrations increased rather dramatically between 1980 and 1990. In the Netherlands, for example, the percent reportedly participating in demonstrations increased from 12 percent in 1980 to 25 percent in 1990. In West Germany, the increase was somewhat less but still significant, from nearly 14 to 19.5 percent over the same period. The difference in the corresponding figures in the United States was even less – from 12 percent in 1980 to 15 percent in 1990, but the trend was still upwards. It is arguable, then, that social movements and the activities they sponsor have become a kind of

fifth estate in the world today. If so, then understanding our own societies, as well as the larger social world in which they are embedded, clearly requires some knowledge and understanding of social movements and the activities with which they are associated.

Just as social movement activity appears to have become a more ubiquitous social form in the world today, even to the point of becoming a routinized avenue for expressing publicly collective grievances, so there has been a corresponding proliferation of scholarly research on social movements and related activity throughout much of the world, and particularly within Europe and the US. Taking what are generally regarded as the top four journals in American sociology (*American Sociological Review*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *Social Forces*, and *Social Problems*), for example, there has been a steady increase in the proportion of collective action and social movement articles published in these journals since the middle of the past century: from 2.23 percent for the 1950s, to 4.13 percent for the 1970s, to 9.45 percent for the 1990s.[2] Also suggestive of growing scholarly interest in the study of social movements is the relatively large number of edited volumes, based principally on social movement conference proceedings, published since the early 1990s (e.g., Morris and Mueller 1992; Laraña et al. 1994; Jenkins and Klandermans 1995; Johnston and Klandermans 1995; McAdam et al. 1996; Smith et al.; Costain and McFarland 1998; Meyer and Tarrow 1998; della Porta et al. 1999; Stryker et al. 2000; Goodwin et al. 2001; Mansbridge and Morris 2001; Meyer et al. 2002; Diani and McAdam 2003). As well, there have been a number of social movement texts (Garner 1996; Tarrow 1998; della Porta and Diani 1999; Buechler 2000) and edited, textlike readers (Darnovsky et al. 1995; Lyman 1995; Buechler and Cylke 1997; McAdam and Snow 1997; Goodwin and Jasper 2003) published within the past decade. The publication of two international journals of research and theory about social movements and related collective actions – *Mobilization* (published in the US) and *Social Movement Studies* (published in the UK) – also points to increasing scholarship in this area. And finally, McAdam et al. (2001) recent synthetic project, and the debate it has generated provide further indication of a vibrant area of study.[3]

Clearly there has been a proliferation of research and writing on social movements during the past several decades, and particularly during the 1990s. Yet, there is no single volume that provides in-depth, synthetic examinations of a comprehensive set of movement-related topics and issues in a fashion that reflects and embodies the growing internationalization of social movement scholarship. That is what this volume seeks to do. In contrast to most of the conference-based edited volumes that are narrowly focused on particular dimensions, processes, or contexts relevant to social movements – such as culture, emotion, identity, networks, and globalization – this volume covers the major processes and issues generally regarded as relevant to understanding the course and character, indeed the dynamics, of social movements. And, in doing so, it provides broader coverage, and thus is more comprehensive, than other existing edited volumes and texts on social movements. But this topical breadth is afforded without sacrificing focus and detail, as each of the contributions to the volume provides an in-depth, state-of-the-art overview of the topics addressed, whether it be a facilitative context or condition, a particular set of outcomes, or a major social movement. And finally, in recognition of the growing internationalization of social movement scholarship, the volume was compiled with

the additional objective of reflecting this internationalization in terms of both empirical substance and chapter authorship. Our objective with this volume, then, is to provide in-depth, synthetic examinations of a comprehensive set of movement-related topics and issues by a significant cross-section of internationally recognized scholars.

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

Conceptualizing Social Movements

Definitions of social movements are not hard to come by. They are readily provided in most textlike treatments of the topic (e.g., Turner and Killian 1987; Tarrow 1998; della Porta and Diani 1999), in edited volumes of conference proceedings and previously published articles and scholarly papers (e.g., McAdam and Snow 1997; Meyer and Tarrow 1998; Goodwin and Jasper 2003), and in summary, encyclopedia-like essays (e.g., McAdam et al. 1988; Benford et al. 2000). Although the various definitions of movements may differ in terms of what is emphasized or accented, most are based on three or more of the following axes: collective or joint action; change-oriented goals or claims; some extra- or non-institutional collective action; some degree of organization; and some degree of temporal continuity. Thus, rather than begin with a straightforward conceptualization, we consider first these conceptual axes.[4]

Social Movements as a Form of Collective Action outside of Institutional Channels

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

At its most elementary level, collective action consists of any goal-directed activity engaged in jointly by two or more individuals. It entails the pursuit of a common objective through joint action – that is, people working together in some fashion for a variety of reasons, often including the belief that doing so enhances the prospect of achieving the objective. Since collective action so defined obviously includes a large number of human behaviors, it is useful to differentiate those collective actions that are institutionalized or normatively sanctioned from those that are not and that fall

outside of institutional channels. Since social movements are defined *in part* by their use of noninstitutionalized means of action, such as appropriating and using public and quasipublic places for purposes other than those for which they were designed or intended, introducing this distinction clearly reduces the number of joint actions that bear a family resemblance to movements. As Sidney Tarrow notes in this regard: collective action not only "takes many forms – brief or sustained, institutionalized or disruptive, humdrum or dramatic," but "most of it occurs within institutions on the part of constituted groups acting in the name of goals that would hardly raise an eyebrow" (1998: 3).

Social Movements and Collective Behavior

Parsing collective action via the institutional/noninstitutional distinction still leaves numerous collective actions within the latter category. Traditionally, most of these noninstitutional collective actions, including those associated with social movements, have been treated as varieties of collective behavior. Broadly conceived, collective behavior refers to "extrainstitutional, group-problem solving behavior that encompasses an array of collective actions, ranging from protest demonstrations, to behavior in disasters, to mass or diffuse phenomena, such as fads and crazes, to social movements and even revolution" (Snow and Oliver 1995: 571). Thus, just as social movements are a form of collective action, so it has been argued that they also constitute a species of collective behavior. But they also differ significantly from most other variants of collective behavior – such as crowds, panics, fads, and crazes – in terms of their other central defining characteristics discussed below.[5]

Social Movements and Interest Groups

Just as social movements overlap to some degree with some forms of collective behavior, so they also overlap with interests groups, which also comprise another set of collective actors that are often equated with social movements. Clearly interest groups, such as Planned Parenthood and the Christian Coalition, and some social movements, such as the pro-choice and pro-life movements, are quite similar in terms of the interests and objectives they share with respect to some aspect of social life. Yet there are also noteworthy differences. First, interest groups are generally defined in relation to the government or polity (Walker 1991), whereas the relevance and interests of social movements extend well beyond the polity to other institutional spheres and authorities. Second, even when social movements are directly oriented to the polity or state, their standing is different. Interest groups are generally embedded within the political arena, as most are regarded as legitimate actors within it. Social movements, on the other hand, are typically outside of the polity, or overlap with it in a precarious fashion, because they seldom have the same standing or degree of access to or recognition among political authorities.

A third difference follows: interest groups pursue their collective objectives mainly through institutionalized means, such as lobbying and soliciting campaign contributions, whereas social movements pursue their collective ends mainly via the use of noninstitutional means, such as conducting marches, boycotts, and sit-ins. Social movements may sometimes operate squarely within the political arena as well, as

when they focus on influencing and even controlling party platforms at national political conventions in the US (Bunis 1993). But their action repertoires are generally skewed in the direction of extrainstitutional lines of action. Thus, to paraphrase William Gamson (1990), interests groups and politically oriented social movements are not so much different species as members of the same species positioned differently in relation to the polity or state. But that differential positioning is sufficiently important to produce different sets of strategic and tactical behaviors, and thus different kinds of collectivities.[6]

Connections and Overlaps

To note the distinction among social movements, other varieties of collective behavior, and interest groups is not to assert that they do not overlap at times. The relationship between nonconventional crowd activity and social movements is illustrative. Although some crowds arise spontaneously and dissipate just as quickly, others are the result of prior planning, organization, and negotiation. In such cases, they often are sponsored and organized by a social movement, and constitute part of its tactical repertoire for dramatizing its grievances and pressing its claims (see chapter 12 in this volume). When this occurs, which is probably the dominant pattern for most protest crowds or demonstrations, neither the crowd phenomena nor the movement can be thoroughly understood without understanding the relationship between them. Thus, while social movements can be distinguished conceptually from other forms of collective action and collective behavior, social movements and some crowd phenomena often are intimately linked. Social movements and interest groups can be closely connected too, as when they form an alliance to press their joint interests together. Moreover, as social movements develop over time, they often become more and more institutionalized, with some of them evolving (at least partially) into interest groups or even political parties.

Social Movements as Challengers to or Defenders of Existing Authority

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

Whatever the components of various definitions of social moments, all emphasize that movements are in the business of promoting or resisting change with respect to some aspect of the world in which we live. Indeed, fostering or halting change is the *raison d'être* for all social movements. But scholars are not of one mind when it comes to specifying the character of the change sought. Some leave the question open-ended, stating simply that social movements are "collective attempts to promote or resist change in a society or group" (Turner and Killian 1987: 223; Benford et al. 2000: 2717); others narrow the range of targets of change

primarily to those within the political arena, as reflected in the recent conceptualization of movements as a variant of "contentious politics" (McAdam et al. 2001). Contentious politics is a cover term encompassing "collective political struggle" that is "episodic" in the sense of not being regularly scheduled on the political docket, "public" in the sense of excluding claim-making "that occurs entirely within-well bounded organizations," and "manifestly political" in the sense that a government is involved as a claimant, target, or mediator (McAdam et al. 2001: 5).

Neither the open-ended nor the manifestly political conceptual strategy is entirely satisfactory. The open-ended one is too ambiguous: the emphasis on "collective political struggle" is too institutionally narrow, excluding challenges rooted in other institutional and sociocultural contexts.[7] Thus, in order to have an understanding of social movements that is both more inclusive in terms of what gets counted as social movement activity, and yet more tightly anchored institutionally and culturally, we argue that movements be considered as challengers to or defenders of existing *institutional authority* – whether it is located in the political, corporate, religious, or educational realm – or patterns of *cultural authority*, such as systems of beliefs or practices reflective of those beliefs.[8]

Movements as Organized Activity

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

Given these contrasting arguments regarding the relationship between organization and social movements, it seems reasonable to ask whether one is more accurate than

another, or if we must choose one over another? The answer to both questions is "no!" There is absolutely no question about the fact that social movement activity is organized in some fashion or another. Clearly there are different forms of organization (e.g., single SMO vs. multiple, networked SMOs) and degrees of organization (e.g., tightly coupled vs. loosely coupled), and clearly there are differences in the consequences of different forms and degrees of organization. But to note such differences is not grounds for dismissing the significance of organization to social movements.

Tarrow (1998: 123–4) helps clarify these issues when he distinguishes between social movements as formal organizations, the organization of collective action, and social movements as connective structures or networks. Conceptually, the issue concerns neither the form nor consequences of organizations, but the fact that the existence of social movement activity implies some degree of organization. To illustrate, consider the civil rights movement of the 1960s, and some of its leaders, such as Martin Luther King and Stokely Carmichael, as well as various organizational representatives, such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Indeed, it is difficult to comprehend the civil rights movement in the absence of the leaders and organizations associated with it. The same can be said as well about many other social movements. Take, for example, the student-led pro-democracy movement in Beijing. Not only were the actions of demonstrators coordinated, but there were various organizing groups.

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

Movements as Existing with Some Temporal Continuity

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

Yet, to note that movements are temporally episodic is not to suggest that they are generally fly-by-night fads that are literally here today and gone tomorrow. Clearly there is considerable variability in their careers or life course, as some movements do indeed last for a very short time, as with most neighborhood, NIMBY oppositions; while others endure for decades, as with the Heaven's Gate "cult" that was first observed in the US in the 1970s (Balch 1995) and the Sokagakkai/Nichiren Shoshu Buddhist movement that was first introduced into the US in the early 1960s (Snow