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Giugni, Marco

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MODERN PROTEST POLITICS



Marco Giugni

Social protest is a permanent, though discontinuous, feature of European society since the dawn of history. It occurs when ordinary people act together to defend threatened collective interests and/or identities or to promote new ones. Historically it has taken various forms: antitax revolts, struggles against conscription, food riots, land occupations, seizures of grain, insurrections, strikes, barricades, public meetings, and many others. At times social protest cascaded into larger cycles of contention involving dense interactions among various groups using different forms of action (Tarrow, 1998). These phases of generalized contentious activity gave rise to revolutions when multiple centers of sovereignty were created, which turned the conflict into a struggle ending in a forcible transfer of power (Tilly, 1993). Most often, however, social protest occurs at a lower scale, involving a limited number of actors who lack regular access to institutions and engage in confrontations with elites, authorities, and opponents. When these actors engage in sustained challenges to power holders based on common purposes and social solidarities, we have a social movement.

European social movements emerged as two large-scale social processes—the emergence of an urban-industrial economy and the consolidation of the national state (Tilly et al., 1975)—interacted to produce fundamental structural changes in history. On the one hand, capitalism—the concentration of the means of production and the separation between those who control these means and those who provide labor—produced new conflicts and oppositions, most notably between capital and labor. On the other hand, state formation—the creation of autonomous, differentiated, and centralized governmental organizations that are territorially bounded and have the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence over that territory—created a concentration of power and of coercive means in the hands of state authorities. Such infrastructure was needed, among other things, to collect taxes and to engage in wars. In due time, the state and its representative institutions such as the parliament became the main target of social protest as national

politics and local contention intertwined to an increasingly larger extent (Tilly, 1995).

The concentration of capital and coercive means that marks the expansion and consolidation of the European national state implied a transformation of the structures of power in society. New collective interests and identities emerged, new opportunities arose, and new forms of group organization (such as the class) appeared. This, in turn, contributed to the birth of modern social movements by remodeling the forms of collective action (see Figure 1). Charles Tilly (1986, 1995) has shown in his masterly accounts of popular contention in France and Britain how the repertoires of contention changed under the influence of these two large-scale processes via the restructuring of interests (and identities), opportunities, and organization.

Social movements are a special form of social protest and contentious collective action, one that emerged out of the shift from the old to the new repertoire of contention as the concentration of capital and coercion transformed its modalities. Sidney Tarrow (1998, p. 30) has described this shift as follows:

In the 1780s, people knew how to seize shipments of grain, attack tax gatherers, burn tax registers, and take revenge on wrongdoers and people who had violated community norms. But they were not yet familiar with acts like the mass demonstration, the strike, or urban insurrection on behalf of common goals. By the end of the 1848 revolution, the petition, the public meeting, the demonstration, and the barricade were well-known routines, employed for a variety of purposes and by different combinations of social actors.

The national social movement of the late twentieth century was born, indeed invented by Europeans as they created the new collective-action repertoire, as Tilly puts it (see his article on collective action in this volume), and can be defined as:

a sustained challenge to powerholders in the name of a population living under the jurisdiction of those powerholders by means of repeated public displays of that population's numbers, commitment, unity, and worthiness. (Tilly, 1994, p. 7)

SOCIETAL CLEAVAGES AND EUROPEAN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The nineteenth century: Traditional lines of conflict. Social movements are the overt expression of latent social conflicts. Their mobilization rests upon societal cleavages, that is, social and cultural dividing lines that oppose the interests and identities of different groups in society. Capitalism and state formation did not only produce a reorientation of the repertoires of collective action. They also modified the structure of dominant conflicts in society and hence the social-structural foundations of social movements. Traditional cleavages constitute the condition for the mobilization of many contemporary movements. In his fundamental geopolitical mapping of Europe, Stein Rokkan (1970) stressed four traditional cleavages, which are particularly important in this respect: the center-periphery, religious, urban-rural, and class cleavages (see Kriesi et al., 1995, ch. 2, for a discussion in relation to social movements).

Social movements are organized efforts, based on a shared identity, to reach a common goal mainly, though not exclusively, through noninstitutional means. This clearly distinguishes them both from political parties (which engage in elections) and interest groups (which act mainly within the existing institutional channels by way of lobbying and negotiations with the power holders), although at times they make use of forms of action usually adopted by the latter. This definition also emphasizes the action side of movements rather than their organizational basis or their ideology, although the latter two aspects allow us to distinguish between movements and enter the explanation of their mobilization. It therefore excludes purely cultural-ideological movements such as the *Nouvelle Droite* (New Right) in France or cultural-spiritual experiences such as the New Age, as well as religious movements insofar as they do not express themselves through political challenges.

This article deals with social movements as a particular form of the broader category of contentious politics, which includes related phenomena such as riots, rebellions, terrorism, civil wars, and revolutions, and which can be defined as collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects involving government as mediator, target, or claimant and bearing on the interests of claimants (McAdam et al., 1996; forthcoming). Given their origin in the formation of the modern national state, this article focuses on the emergence and mobilization of in western Europe from the mid-nineteenth through the twentieth century, drawing from the work of social historians, sociologists, and political scientists.

The center-periphery cleavage forms the basis for the mobilization of regionalist and nationalist movements. Examples are countless: Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales in Britain; Catalonia, Galicia, and the Basque country in Spain; Alsace, Brittany, Corsica, Occitania, and again the Basque country in France; Friuli, Sardinia, Southern Tyrol, and the Val d'Aosta in Italy; Flanders and Wallony in Belgium; Jura in Switzerland; and many others. Most of these movements claim have as their final objective the political control over a given territory and are coupled with an ethnically based identity. As such they are ethnic-national movements. The example of the Italian Northern League, however, indicates that this is not always the case. Its claim for an independent or autonomous Padania (the final goal varied over time, shifting back and forth from the quest for more autonomy to full independence) did not rest upon an ethnic identity. It is sometimes framed as such, but there is no basis for a collective identity of the people of Padania in ethnocultural terms. However, regionalist or nationalist claims are typically related to a specific territorial identity and are facilitated by two kinds of cultural resources: religion and especially language. In addition, the strength of this cleavage depends very much on the structure of the state, specifically on its degree of centralization. Regionalist and nationalist claims historically were more frequent in centralized states like France and Spain than in federalist ones like Germany and Switzerland, where the devolution of power to the peripheral minorities tends to institutionalize the conflict between the center and the periphery. They occurred especially

when the minority in question has been or felt discriminated against.

The religious cleavage in Europe refers to the opposition between Catholics and Protestants that emerged out of the sixteenth century Reformation. It took different forms in countries where one of the two religions predominates, like France, Italy, and Spain, and in countries that were religiously mixed, like Germany and Switzerland. In predominantly Catholic nations, this cleavage refers to the conflict between the church and the state. In religiously mixed nations it historically opposed Catholics and Protestants. By the late twentieth century the religious cleavage had lost much of its strength and did not often give rise to contentious collective action, although from time to time in predominantly Catholic countries, popular upsurges of protest occurred, typically with regard to education issues. France is a well-documented case in point. Elsewhere, the religious conflict was largely institutionalized into the party system. To be sure, on the world scale the main opposition of the late twentieth century was that between Judaism and Christianity (especially Catholicism) and Islam. Thus, the religious cleavage may be seen as returning in certain western European countries, such as France and Britain, that hosted high numbers of immigrants from the Muslim world. This displacement of the traditional religious cleavage may have facilitated the mobilization of Muslim immigrants in those countries, and indirectly provoked the reaction of racist and extreme right groups.

The urban-rural cleavage opposes Europe's urban and industrial regions to the rural areas where agriculture and the peasant economy prevailed. This line of conflict was dominant during the nineteenth century, forming the basis for the social protest carried on by farmers. In the course of the twentieth century it weakened considerably as the number of farmers shrunk everywhere in Europe and as they became increasingly integrated into national politics. However, in many countries they maintained a strong organization and collective identity, and were able to mobilize in important ways—as they often did in France—often in reaction to the threats posed on them by the process of European economic integration.

The fourth and last of the traditional cleavages is certainly the most important. The class cleavage refers basically to the opposition between the working class and the bourgeoisie. Thus, it obviously underpins the mobilization of the labor movement. The transformation of the class structure that took place with the industrial revolution made this cleavage central from the mid-1800s to at least World War II. The growing role of the service sector in West European

countries, however, eroded a large part of the social basis of the labor movement. Furthermore, increased living standards and the expansion of the welfare state weakened the culture and collective identity of the working class. On both these counts (the structural and the cultural underpinnings of labor movements), the strength of the class cleavage diminished in the course of the twentieth century, but kept nevertheless an important mobilization capacity. This holds true especially in countries like France and Italy, in which the industrial conflict between labor and capital was not pacified and therefore remains politically salient.

Twentieth century: New lines of conflict. If the rise of labor and other European social movements stems largely from the profound transformations of the societal conflict structure inscribed in the process of modernization, the same can be said of movements of the second half of the twentieth century. At least in western Europe, the four traditional cleavages highlighted by Rokkan weakened during the twentieth century. At the same time, the weakening of traditional structures and the centrality of the class conflict brought to the fore a new cultural and social cleavage that opposed different sectors within the new middle class (Kriesi 1989): those with a “postmaterialist” value system, stressing individual participation, emancipation, and self-fulfillment; and those with a “materialist” value system, emphasizing socioeconomic needs as well as social order and security. Increased social mobility, the development of a mass education system, and above all the post-World War II economic growth with the related expansion of the welfare state resulted in economic well-being, and may have provoked what Ronald Inglehart (1977) called the “silent revolution,” that is, a shift from materialist to postmaterialist values in western societies, leading to the emergence of what came to be known as the new social movements.

New social movements, mobilized around demands for cultural rights and a better quality of life, had three main thematic foci: (1) the criticism addressed to the new risks and threats engendered by economic growth and technological progress; (2) the rejection of all sorts of bureaucratic control over the individual; and (3) the assertion of the right to one's own lifestyle and the right to cultural difference. Thus, the new social movements were situated at the crossroads of the criticism of modern civilization and the search for the cultural emancipation of marginalized minorities. Some prefer to call them left-libertarian movements (della Porta 1995). They are “left” because they mistrust the marketplace, private investment, and the ethic of achievement, and they

are committed to egalitarian distribution; they are “libertarian” insofar as they reject the regulation of individual and collective conduct by both private and public bureaucracies in favor of participatory democracy and the autonomy from market and from bureaucratic dictates. This label refers to a social movement family that includes the New Left, which prevailed in the 1960s and 1970s; the new social movements, which took the upper hand in the 1980s and 1990s; as well as student movements.

Although there is no clear-cut demarcation between “old” and “new,” most observers would call “new” the following movements: peace, ecology, antinuclear, women’s, solidarity (humanitarian, antiracist), squatters’, and other counter-cultural movements, as well as movements mobilizing for the rights of often-discriminated minorities such as gays and lesbians. Some would add student movements to this list. Others, however, consider them a precursor of the new social movements, which are seen as more pragmatic and less tied to the ideology and organizations of the New Left.

Labor movements (and their ramifications within institutional arenas, most notably social-democratic parties and labor unions) and the new social movements are two dominant areas of social protest—better yet, two political families—of twentieth-century Europe. Both can be classified as leftist forms of social

protest. A third area, located at the opposite end of the political spectrum, comprises conservative and extreme right movements. But, is this a real political family? Can we find a common denominator that allows us to place them in one and the same category? Piero Ignazi (1994) finds at least three different streams within the ideology of the Right: (1) a conservative stream that stresses order and tradition but accepts modernity; (2) a “counterrevolutionary” stream, basically antimodernist and nostalgic for the *ancien régime*; and (3) a fascist stream, profoundly anticommunist but in its own way revolutionary. (This distinction is only in part drawn from the classical division proposed by René Rémond, which posits a legitimist and traditionalist right, an Orleanist and liberal right, and a Bonapartist and authoritarian right, which is the precursor of fascism.) However, while we may identify certain traits that unite rightist groups and clearly distinguish them from the Left, in particular with respect to the notions of social justice and equality, it is very difficult to put in the same field liberal, conservative, and authoritarian currents. On the one hand, fascism is clearly opposed to liberalism as it emphasizes the superiority of the state over the individual and poses limitations to individual freedoms. On the other hand, with its stress on the creation of a new order and its nationalistic populism, the fascist tradition is also profoundly anticonservative

and revolutionary, and hence clearly distinct from the moderate (conservative) right. Furthermore, the fascist ideology is antisystemic, for it displays a fundamental opposition that undermines the legitimacy of representative democracy.

The legitimist (monarchist) and Bonapartist traditions singled out by Rémond form the initial, nineteenth-century ideological underpinnings of the extreme right in the European context (Ignazi, 1994). While the former only rarely gave rise to forms of social protest and was for the most part confined to a marginal space, the latter has been sadly important as it was at the heart of the rise of various fascist movements and regimes in several European countries, most notably Germany, Italy, and Spain, between the two world wars. In addition, various neofascist and neonazi groups, have, explicitly or implicitly, referred back to this ideological tradition. (Whether we can speak of social movements in these cases is doubtful, at least following the definition used here.)

The “traditional extreme right” stems from the conflicts underlying the development of the industrial society and is therefore, in a way, the other side of the coin represented by the class cleavage. Another type of right surfaced in the 1980s and 1990s, which some have called the “postindustrial extreme right” (Ignazi, 1994) and others the “new radical right” (Kitschelt, 1995). Like the traditional extreme right, the new radical right is basically antisystemic. Yet it does not stem from the fascist tradition, and sometimes is even opposed to it ideologically. It is better seen as a response to the transformations that characterized Western Europe after World War II. The weakening of traditional bonds and the emphasis on self-determination and individual freedom are among the outcomes of these transformations. In a way, the structural transformations that have characterized western society during the twentieth century gave rise to new social and cultural cleavages which came to underpin both the new social movements and the new radical right. The movements of the extreme right, in this view, express a deepening conflict between the “winners” and the “losers” of the modernization process (Kriesi, 1999). People adhering to the extreme right would be the “losers,” as they would have poor social and cultural resources to cope with rapid social change (accelerated by globalization processes).

While the value system carried by the new social movements was basically social-democratic, libertarian, and emancipatory, that of the extreme right was antisystemic, authoritarian, and antiegalitarian. The discontinuity of the new radical right with the traditional extreme right is seen in the fact that it often has a neoliberal view with regard to economic issues.

According to Kitschelt (1995), the new radical right combines an authoritarian ideology, a market/liberal position toward the allocation of resources, and a particularistic conception of citizenship and membership in the national community. It is therefore not surprising that it has found in immigration and the multicultural society, which it resists on the basis of an ethnocultural conception of the national identity, one of its main grounds for mobilization. Indeed, one of the main characteristics of the new radical right in western Europe, together with its populist appeal, is its xenophobia, which often leads to overtly racist attitudes and behaviors.

The European extreme right, both in its traditional and new radical variants, has usually been channeled into parliamentary politics, taking the form of a party. At the same time, however, these parties have often behaved as social movements, mobilizing people in the streets and challenging the established authorities by means of unconventional protest actions. In addition, especially in the last part of the twentieth century, violence by small extreme right groups surfaced in various countries. Such violence basically took three forms: (1) planned and organized terrorist acts (especially during the 1960s and 1970s, for example by rightist anarchists); (2) more spontaneous activities by various groups of skinheads and naziskins (often addressed against immigrants and asylum seekers, especially during the 1980s and 1990s); and (3), less often, attacks by radical right religious fundamentalists (such as antiabortion activists).

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Those who do not fear simplification may think of different historical periods as being characterized by a dominant social conflict that gives rise to a specific type of social protest. According to Alain Touraine (1984), for example, if the labor movement is the central movement of industrial society, the new social movements express the new conflicts inherent in industrial society, whereby symbolic rather than material goods are the crucial stake. In a more systematic fashion, the German sociologist Joachim Raschke (1985) has described as a succession of three political paradigms the shift in the focus of conflict that has taken place since the second half of the nineteenth century. The forms of resistance that characterized Europe in the *ancien régime*, such food riots and tax revolts, are centered around the “authority paradigm” and reflect the struggle against an unequal distribution of power. The closer we get to the French Revolution, the more

this kind of protest concerns the fundamental rights of people and—if these rights are met—citizens: freedom of speech and assembly, voting rights, and so on. In the course of the nineteenth century, and especially after 1848, the crucial conflict shifted toward class conflict, centered around the “distribution paradigm” opposing the owners of the means of production against the labor force. Social rights became the crucial stake, and the main issues had to do with the distribution of wealth in society. More or less since the 1960s, finally, the dominant conflict has come to reflect the “lifestyle paradigm.” The centrality of class conflict is undermined, as the defense of interests and identities linked to traditional cleavages, typical of the old politics, has lost significance in favor of nonmaterial issues addressed by the new politics, such as the quality of life, minority rights, unconventional lifestyles, environmental protection, and so forth. Cultural rights and individual autonomy have become the crucial objects of contention.

To be sure, some of the themes raised by the new social movements were already present in the nineteenth century. This holds especially for the women’s, ecology, and peace movements, which are among the most important, both quantitatively in terms of political mobilization and qualitatively with regard to the relevance of their claims for twentieth-century. Not incidentally, these precursors of the contemporary new social movements emerged at a time when the national social movement was slowly forming as a major collective actor. Thus, the roots of the women’s movement can be found in the *cabiers des doléances* of women during the French Revolution, in which they complained that the only choice left them was between misery and gallantry. The first organizations to defend the interests of women began their activity in Britain in the first half of the nineteenth century. Curiously, French feminists remained quite marginal for a long time. Contemporary environmentalism was pioneered by German romanticism, and the first environmental organizations in Europe were established in the late nineteenth century. These small circles of ecologists *ante litteram* were mainly concerned about the need to protect and conserve certain natural spaces.

The most persistent precursor to the new social movements formed around the issues of peace and war. The origins of modern pacifism can be found in the Enlightenment, or, from an organizational point of view, at the time of the Napoleonic Wars; perhaps the first peace association in Europe, the London Peace Society, was formed in 1816. Similar organizations were created across Europe in the following decades. Their efforts to prevent war, which often contained a

strong internationalist dimension, became stronger concomitantly with the intensification of international conflicts, most notably at the end of the nineteenth century and during the two world wars. After the Russian Revolution, the pacifist movement inevitably suffered a split between a radical, communist-oriented wing and a moderate, most often religiously-based wing. This split became most visible during the years of the cold war, when the issue of nuclear arms took center stage.

Just as the repertoires of contention had changed in the shift from the *ancien régime* to modernity, women’s, ecology, and peace issues were transformed in the twentieth century as a result of the “silent revolution” described by Inglehart. Initially, in their archaic forms, the new social movements were generally restricted to small circles of scientific, social, and intellectual elites. Furthermore, issues they were concerned with were not yet anchored in a larger, structural social conflict. The 1960s and 1970s both radicalized and popularized those issues, leading to mass mobilizations on behalf of women’s rights, the environment, the maintenance of peace, and other themes related to new societal risks and cultural lifestyles. This shift revived the movement for women’s liberation and gender equality, political ecology and opposition to the use of nuclear energy, as well as antimilitarism and the fight against the arms race. They did not, however, fully re-

place traditional feminism, nature protection and conservation, and peace reformism.

If taken in a synchronic rather than diachronic perspective, Raschke's distinction of three political paradigms lends itself nicely to a simple classification of European social movements according to the claims they articulated. To do so, however, we must add a further distinction, namely that between movements challenging the established authorities and counter-movements, which defend established rights and privileges against those challenges (Kriesi, 1988). This yields six distinct categories of movements (see table 1). Movements asking for more regional autonomy or for the right to a separate state are the most typical expression of the authority paradigm in Western Europe. Racist movements and various forms of resistance to political autonomy can be seen as their corresponding counter-movements, as they defend traditional privileges by denying fundamental political rights to others. Labor movements are at the core of

the distribution paradigm. Indeed, the greatest impact of the transformation from the old to the new repertoire of contention described by Tilly lies in the creation of the conditions for the political mobilization of workers. Antitax and farmers' movements that defend traditional material privileges are examples of counter-movements acting within this paradigm. Finally, the claims articulated by the new social movements concern the lifestyle paradigm. Within this paradigm, they are distinguished, for example, from antiabortion movements, insofar as the latter defend traditional lifestyles.

CYCLES OF CONTENTION

Political conflicts are ultimately rooted in structural and cultural cleavages. These dividing lines, however, create only the potential for social protest and contentious collective action. They remain latent as long



1848: THE FIRST MODERN CYCLE OF CONTENTION

The first modern cycle of contention peaked in 1848, as insurrections spread across Europe in the spring, facilitated by crop failures of 1846–1847, widespread political repression, and the emergence of nationalism. These insurrections combined a variety of claims and aspirations: from the civil war between Catholic and Protestant cantons in Switzerland to the renewed fight against monarchy and for liberal rights in France; from demands for constitutional reforms in Vienna to Sicily's quest for independence from Naples; from the political and social claims of an emerging working class in Britain to the struggle to end Austrian rule in Serbia, Croatia, Hungary, and northern Italy. By the middle of 1848, all major European regimes were threatened or had been overturned under the push of crowds organizing, marching, and erecting barricades in the streets.

The seeds of this phase of generalized social unrest lie in the French Revolution of 1789 and the July revolution of 1830. Strictly speaking, however, this cycle of contention covers the period from March 1847, when the first open conflicts occurred, to August 1848. The peak was reached in February to April 1848 (see Godechot, 1971).

The 1848 revolutionary upsurges represent the crossroads of the two driving forces of the nineteenth century and of modern European history: liberalism and socialism. It was above all a liberal and bourgeois revolution, focusing on political rights, but in which an emerging and increasingly self-conscious working class was

gaining its place in history and addressing social issues. These two fronts were fighting to defend different interests and against different enemies, but their destinies were intimately interrelated within the logic of industrial and capitalist society. In addition, nationalistic aims and aspirations, embodied by demands for autonomy, independence, and adhesion to other states, intersected with the class struggle.

The cycle had its highest point in France with the February revolution, but it started at Europe's periphery, most notably in the Swiss civil war (Tarrow, 1998). Echoes from the Parisian July Revolution of 1830 gave rise to a struggle for power in Switzerland, which resulted in a series of political and military conflicts in the cantons. The liberal Protestant cantons wanted to strengthen the central power and impose their will on the mainly Catholic rural cantons, which in response formed the *Sonderbund* (separate alliance), a mutual defense league, in 1845. Civil war was declared in August 1847, after the federal Diet had ordered the dissolution of the Catholic-conservative alliance in July of the same year, which refused to comply and was defeated by before the end of the year. In 1848 the now strengthened Swiss Confederation adopted a new federal constitution, which included the democratic principles declared by French revolutionaries some fifty years earlier.

There had been various revolutionary attempts in the Italian states during the 1830s and 1840s, most of

as they are not politicized—that is, until people develop a collective identity, a sense of solidarity, and a political consciousness, all aspects constitutive of a social movement. When and where these processes have occurred, Europeans engaged in challenges to the constituted authorities in the name of their collective interests or identities. While these challenges often emerged and evolved on their own, sometimes they clustered in broader waves of generalized social unrest which we may call cycles of contention. A cycle of contention is

a phase of heightened conflict across the social system: with rapid diffusion of collective action from more mobilized to less mobilized sectors; a rapid pace of inno-

vation in the forms of contention; the creation of new or transformed collective action frames; a combination of organized and unorganized participation; and sequences of intensified information flow and interaction between challengers and authorities. (Tarrow, 1998, p. 142)

Social movements form broader cycles of contention as changes in their external political environment present themselves, affecting the mobilization of several challenging groups, and as different movements influence each other, some providing incentives and opening the way to others.

George Katsiaficas (1987) has identified four periods of crisis and turmoil on a global scale—what



them led by secret societies such as the *Carbonari*, the *Filadelfi*, or Giuseppe Mazzini's Young Italy (see Tilly et al. 1975). Revolts broke out across Italy in 1848 and included attempts by peasants and workers to make their claims heard (especially in the south and in Sicily), as well as temporarily successful bourgeois revolutions in Sicily, Naples, Lombardy, Venice, Tuscany, and the Papal States. In the north, just as in the rest of the Habsburg empire, people fought the Austrians, helped there by King Charles Albert of Piedmont-Sardinia. Although the constitutional and republican experiments were cut short after 1848, this period of unrest paved the way for the Italian Risorgimento, which eventually led to the unification of Italy in 1861, after the previous year's spectacular conquest of the Kingdom of Two Sicilies by Giuseppe Garibaldi.

In Germany, liberal revolutions led to the convening of the Frankfurt Parliament (1848–1849), a national assembly whose members were popularly elected and whose aim was the unification of Germany. In the short term, however, the most straightforward effects of the 1848 unrest occurred in France, most notably in Paris, where the “February revolution” of 1848 led to the abdication of Louis Philippe, the overthrow of the monarchy, and the establishment of the Second Republic. General dissatisfaction with the reactionary policies of the king and his minister François Guizot had been growing in the pre-

ceding years. Furthermore, the poor conditions of workers worsened in the crisis of 1846–1847, which induced socialist Louis Blanc to propose the *ateliers nationaux* (national workshops), factories managed by the state to provide the unemployed with jobs, to counteract these worsening conditions.

The conflict began within institutional circles and then spread outward (Tarrow, 1998). When the regime rejected the parliamentary opposition's demand for suffrage reform, moderates and republicans allied to launch the campaign of “banquets” to promote reform, and took the issue to the streets, not only in Paris but also in the province. The protest turned to overt rebellion as the initiative passed into the hands of the National Guard and the urban poor, and repression provoked an escalation of violence, especially when protests by workers and radical socialists, known as the June Days, were crushed by the government. The new republic inaugurated in February 1848 lasted for less than five years, as conflicting class interests facilitated the coup d'état by Louis-Napoléon in December 1852 and the establishment of the Second Empire under his lead one year later. In France as elsewhere in Europe, moderates pulled back, eventually allowing military force and conservative reaction to gain the upper hand over popular contention, putting an end to the first major European cycle of contention.

he calls “world-historical social movements”—that have occurred since the historical phase that embraced the American and French revolutions: 1848–1849, 1905–1907, 1917–1919, and 1967–1970. Each had its ascending social class, emergent organizations, dominant social vision, and privileged tactics (see table 2 on page 317). At least two of them qualify as major European cycles of contention. The uprisings that broke out all over Europe in the winter and spring of 1848 represent the first modern cycle of protest. This revolutionary period combined issues pertaining to political rights and claims about social rights with large doses of nationalism. In a way, 1848 was at the same time a bourgeois liberal revolution against the

last gasps of an abdicating monarchy and a proletarian revolution of a nascent labor movement struggling for a place on the stage of history. By the time of the Paris Commune in 1871, the latter had fully gained that place. Another major cycle of contention, with fewer consequences, had its peak in 1968. Student and labor movements were at the core of this phase of unrest. Yet, if traditional cleavages and claims typically underpinned the 1848 cycle, the events of 1967–1970 represent the rise of the New Left and of movements based on new—“postmaterialist”—cleavages; in brief, the shift from old to new politics.

Of course, other moments of generalized social unrest have occurred in Europe, like the post-World



1968: STUDENT PROTEST AND THE NEW LEFT

France in May 1968 symbolizes and represents the peak of a cycle of contention that saw students and workers at center stage, but involved other social groups, issues, and claims as well, such as peace, nuclear arms, women's liberation, and other calls for social and cultural emancipation. In brief, a whole political sector known as the New Left contributed to produce a major phase of turmoil. Students across Europe organized assemblies, held sit-ins, and went into the streets to show their dissatisfaction with the higher education system as well as with political institutions and the functioning of society at large. The mobilization of the student movement was particularly significant in Germany, Italy, and France.

Although the most dramatic memories of 1968 come from Paris, the European wave of student unrest began in Germany. In the early 1960s, the German student movement paved the way to the outbreak of protest by providing their counterparts in other countries with ideological tools and a model for a new type of action based on the separation from institutionalized politics and greater autonomy. West Berlin can be considered the birthplace of European student protest, both chronologically and ideologically (Statera, 1975). There, the protest transcended issues pertaining to the university system, first denouncing the Vietnam War and then imperialism, the repressive nature of capitalism, the authoritarian character of society, the lack of real democracy, and so

forth. Students were massively repressed by the German authorities after December 1966, thus facilitating the rise of a strong extraparliamentary opposition starting from mid 1967. The New Left staged a variety of activities during 1967 and 1968, including a series of attacks against a hostile national newspaper monopoly (Katsiaficas, 1987). The unrest became particularly strong when the parliament passed emergency laws aimed at social control on 20 May 1968. A series of actions, blockades, and mass demonstrations were held that month throughout the country, and included a call for a general strike that was endorsed in several cities.

While the major mobilizations in Germany occurred in 1967, in Italy student masses actively participated only in 1968. Yet in both countries the protest radicalized and spread across the nation during 1967 to peak in spring 1968. The Italian student movement began above all at the Universities of Trent and Turin, where in November 1967 students occupied the headquarters of the arts faculties nearly uninterruptedly for about seven months. The unrest took a broader dimension in spring 1968, involving thousands of people all over the country and leading in March to serious clashes with the police at Valle Giulia in Rome. By the end of the year, the student movement had developed ties with workers, who joined the protest with their own grievances and claims. The mobilization of the labor movement peaked in the so-called "Hot Au-

War I period, with the strike wave and the Popular Front in France, the rise of nazism in Germany, and that of fascism above all in Italy and Spain. Another cycle of contention, this time with tremendous social and political impact, occurred at the end of the 1980s in eastern and central Europe. Spurred by the move toward liberalization made by the Soviet party secretary Mikhail Gorbachev through *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring), the powerful mix of claims for civil rights and democracy and together with nationalistic aspirations produced one of the more dramatic geopolitical changes of the twentieth century. The democratic "revolutions" that in 1989–1991 led to the fall of the Berlin wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and eventually to the birth of a

number of new states also show how processes of diffusion may help social protest spread from one place to another, from one country to another. This, together with diffusion from one sector of society to other sectors, contributes to the creation of a cycle of contention.

Cycles of contention have various outcomes. The radicalization of social protest, which can lead to the overt use of violence, is one; its institutionalization is another. Often radicalization and institutionalization both occur at the same time at the end of a cycle of contention as a result of the selective repression exerted by the political authorities, which exploit and exacerbate the split between radicals and moderates within the movements, and of the dynamics of com-



tumn” of 1969 as major strikes threatened to block the Italian economy and as contention was transforming into class struggle. Students, the New Left, and organized workers all contributed to a major cycle of contention, which declined as various groups of the New Left became increasingly active outside the factories, some turning to terrorist activities.

Student unrest in France was the most intense but at the same time the most short-lived within this cycle of contention. The protest both started and ended more abruptly than in Germany and Italy. Although signs of agitation and dissatisfaction with the educational system had already been present before, the effective rise of collective action began in the fall of 1967 and continued sporadically through the winter and early spring of the following year. It then took an upward turn in March and April 1968, not only in France but in various European countries. In France, the turning point occurred on 22 March, following the occupation of the administration building of the University of Nanterre, which became the center of the protest under the leadership of student activist Daniel Cohn-Bendit. The protest turned into revolt and a near insurrection starting from the night between 10 and 11 May 1968, when barricades and clashes with the police in Paris as well as in other cities nearly led to the collapse of the French government, as President Charles de Gaulle, rumored to be considering

resignation dissolved the parliament. As in Italy, the labor movement joined the protest and engaged in a series of large-scale strikes. The cycle was turning into a near revolution, but de Gaulle’s party won the elections in June. After its abrupt rise in May and June 1968, the student movement rapidly demobilized and the working class returned to work with the signature of the Grenelle agreements on 27 May 1968, which closed the crisis as far as industrial relations were concerned. Factory militancy continued, but the May events largely exhausted the mobilization capacity of the other major sectors of the French society.

The student and New Left cycle of contention of 1968 also touched Eastern Europe. The student movement was particularly active in Poland, where it showed characteristics similar to those of its West European counterparts, although its mobilization there did not deal with issues pertaining to the academic structure (Statera, 1975). Protests rapidly spread from Warsaw to the rest of the country in March 1968. The most dramatic images in that part of the Continent, however, come from Czechoslovakia, where the most important popular movement for reform in the East since the one that occurred in Hungary in 1956 was brutally repressed by Soviet arm in August 1968. The Prague Spring thus finished before it could keep its promises, and it was twenty years before revolutionary change came to Eastern Europe.

petition among the groups involved in the protest (della Porta 1995; Tarrow 1989). Yet collective violence is also an outcome of collective action in general, which usually comes in periods of national struggles of power (Tilly et al., 1975).

Terrorism, a special case of violence used for political purposes, is carried out by small, organized, underground organizations. It is not a social movement, but often arises as a result of cycles of contention that involve social movements. In twentieth-century Europe there were three main sources of this highly delegitimized type of political violence: left-wing organizations, right-wing or extreme right organizations, and ethnic-nationalist organizations. Germany and Italy witnessed impressive levels of political

violence in the wake of student and labor unrest that occurred across Europe in the late 1960s and early 1970s (della Porta, 1995). Clandestine armed organizations such as the Red Army Fraction in Germany and the Red Brigades in Italy—to mention only the most famous left-wing terrorist groups—made themselves known during the 1970s. Italy, in particular, suffered from the actions of both left- and right-wing underground organizations. There, the escalation of left-wing violence seems indeed to have been a product of the 1968 cycle of contention. However, this effect is likely to have been exacerbated by a strong left-right polarization and the reminiscences of the harsh confrontations between these two political fronts under the fascist regime in the 1920s and 1930s.



1989: THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENTS IN EASTERN EUROPE

When Mikhail Gorbachev became the general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in March 1985, no one could imagine that a few years later the Berlin wall and “real socialism” would be only history. Gorbachev’s *glasnost* and *perestroika* were a series of reforms and a policy of liberalization that provided new opportunities for people to organize and mobilize. These policies triggered a wave of democratization movements that formed a major cycle of contention, with truly revolutionary outcomes, in east and central Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The symbolic peak of the cycle occurred on 9 November 1989, when East Germany’s government announced the opening of the Berlin wall. Although at times and in some places, as for example in Romania, the protest took violent forms, most of this cycle of contention involved peaceful demonstrations, strikes, and protest marches, which has led some to speak of a “soft revolution” or, specifically referring to the case of Czechoslovakia, of the Velvet Revolution.

This cycle of contention was carried in the first place by claims for civil rights and democracy from below. In addition, as in 1848, liberal revolutions intersected with nationalist strife, and the weakening of the Soviet control stimulated nationalist feelings and aspirations that led to civil war, first in parts of the Soviet Union and later in the Balkans. Gorbachev’s cycle of reform, especially the proposal to introduce real elections and the removal of the threat of Red Army intervention, spurred protests for more autonomy in several republics of the Soviet Union. The first open signs of revolt appeared in Estonia and Armenia in February 1988 and proliferated in the course

of 1989, when in the three Baltic republics (Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia) people went to the streets to call for independence from Moscow. Social protest remained sustained in the former Soviet Union through 1990 and 1991, and continued even into 1992 (Beissinger, 1998). Indeed, although at the same time, participation diminished, violence increased dramatically in 1992, also as a result of the military intervention of the government in Moscow. The three Baltic republics proclaimed their independence in 1990. Georgia followed in 1991. The Soviet Union collapsed in the wake of the attempted coup d’état by party hardliners in August of that year.

Also in the spring of 1989, conflict emerged in Yugoslavia between the ruling Serbs and the country’s other ethnic groups, who demanded more autonomy from Belgrade. This conflict led to the civil wars that shook the Balkan area in the 1990s. First Slovenia, then Croatia and Bosnia fought for and eventually obtained their independence.

Social protest played an especially significant role in East Germany and Czechoslovakia. Concerning the former country, the decision by the Hungarian authorities to open the east-west border and hence to create a breach in the Iron Curtain in the summer of 1989, with the resulting exodus of people from East Germany, precipitated the crisis and further encouraged people to demonstrate first for political reform and then for German reunification (see Oberschall, 1996). The key events occurred in Leipzig, the second-largest city, in fall 1989. In spite of initial repression, increasingly larger crowds staged a series of demonstrations and marches, sometimes with many thousands of people, which peaked in

Other countries were touched less by left- and right-wing terrorism but dealt with violent actions taken by the armed branches of nationalist movements. Britain, France, and Spain certainly suffered from this type of political violence. Terrorist acts respectively by the Irish Republican Army, the ETA Basque organization, and Corsican nationalist groups filled the pages of newspapers for many years. In these cases, terrorism appears less as an outcome of a given

cycle of contention than as an endemic feature of those societies, although the pace and intensity of terrorist acts may vary according to the ebb and flow of nationalist protest more generally.

Cycles of contention sometimes evolved into full-fledged revolutions, as in 1789 France, 1917 Russia, or in 1989–1991 Eastern Europe. Historians have identified the major factors that may produce a revolution: the weakness of the state (due to either in-



October of that year. Shortly, thereafter, a weakened government was forced to announce the opening of the Berlin Wall.

The protest spread rapidly from East Germany to Czechoslovakia and the Balkans. The Velvet Revolution that eventually led to the division of Czechoslovakia into two separate countries (the Czech Republic and Slovakia) was successful in short order. Although a peak in mobilization and clashes with the police occurred in January 1989, the democratic movement took a real popular dimension only in the fall of 1989. The strongest mobilization had its center in Prague and lasted only six weeks, including a general strike on 17 November, which proved

to be a crucial event in the challenge to the Communist regime (see Oberschall, 1996). The dissident alliance Civil Forum was founded in Prague on 20 November. By the end of 1989, Václav Havel, the leader of the democratic opposition to the regime, was the new president of Czechoslovakia.

At more or less the same time, in Romania the Communist regime shot at people demonstrating in Timișoara. Previously this would probably have meant the retreat of demonstrators and the “reestablishment of order,” but in the changed international context of the late 1980s the inevitable result of this harsh repression was an escalation of violence that led to the arrest and the execution, in December 1989, of president Nicolae Ceaușescu and his wife. These events strongly contrast with the changes that occurred in Hungary and in Poland. In Hungary, social protest in 1988 and 1989 found a divided Communist party, and opposition was facilitated by the erosion of its authority from within. In Poland, negotiations between the government and the free union *Solidarność* (Solidarity) began at the end of 1988, eight years after the latter was outlawed in 1981. The first noncommunist government was freely elected in a Communist country on the following year.

The democratic movements of the late 1990s produced profound changes in Europe’s social and political landscape: more than seventy years of applied communism came to an abrupt end as the Soviet Union collapsed and the Warsaw Pact broke up; new states were created, in some cases after bloody civil wars, and Europe’s geopolitical configuration was revolutionized with the end of the bipolar system.

ternal or external pressures, or both), the creation of a situation of multiple sovereignty, and the responses by the state to the claims for the control of power made by an increasingly strong and radical collaborative effort to overthrow the state (Tilly, 1993). In brief, revolutionary situations (i.e., open divisions of sovereignty) occurred when a deeply fragmented state was unable to fulfill its basic functions and when there were at least two contenders struggling for power.

These situations produced revolutionary outcomes (i.e. a forcible transfer of power from one contending party to the other) when a weakened state responded to challengers with inconsistent repression. Furthermore, state repression was all the more likely to lead to a revolutionary outcome to the extent that it—and those who perpetrated it—was perceived and evaluated as illegitimate by a large number of people in society.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CROSS-NATIONAL VARIATIONS

State fragmentation and repression thus appear as major determinants of the shift from social movements to cycles of contention and revolutions. This suggests that contentious collective action is not simply the product of grievances or perceived threats. Indeed, among the major contributions of research since 1970 is the idea that, contrary to what breakdown and collective behavior theories postulated, social change impinges only indirectly upon social protest through a restructuring of existing power relations, not directly by creating social stress and deprivation to which protest would be a collective response. Students of social movements have elaborated the concept of political opportunity structures to account for the emergence of contentious collective action and to explain its ebbs and flows. Political opportunity structures capture those aspects of the political context of movements that mediate the impact of large-scale social changes on social protest and either encourage or discourage mobilization.

Doug McAdam (1996) has made an attempt to summarize the numerous dimensions of political opportunity structures found in the extant literature. He came up with the following four kinds of “signals to social or political actors:” (1) the relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system; (2) the stability or instability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity; (3) the presence or absence of elite allies; and (4) the state’s capacity and propensity for repression. Some of these aspects of the external environment of social movements are rather stable (e.g. the institutional structure of the state); others are more volatile and subject to shifts over time (e.g., political alignments). All of them affect people’s expectations for success or failure of collective action and either increase or decrease the social and political costs of mobilization.

Political opportunities, however, do not single-handedly produce social movements. Other factors concur to give rise to this form of contentious collective action once processes of large-scale social change have created the structural and cultural cleavages that provide the conditions for their political mobilization. European social movements have emerged due to the interplay of the mobilizing structures by which groups seek to organize, the cultural framing processes by which people define and interpret situations and events, and the political opportunities that provide them with the incentives to act collectively. Tarrow (1998) has aptly summarized the process of movement emergence as follows:

contentious politics is produced when political opportunities broaden, when they demonstrate the potential for alliances, and when they reveal the opponents’ vulnerability. Contention crystallizes into a social movement when it taps embedded social networks and connective structures and produces collective action frames and supportive identities able to sustain contention with powerful opponents. By mounting familiar forms of contention, movements become the focal points that transform external opportunities into resources. Repertoires of contention, social networks, and cultural frames lower the costs of bringing people into collective action, induce confidence that they are not alone, and give broader meaning to their claims. Together, these factors trigger the dynamic processes that have made social movements historically central to political and social change (p. 23).

There are few studies that compare the mobilization of European social movements across countries by means of systematic empirical evidence. One of the reasons is that this is a costly and time-consuming endeavor. This state of affairs, however, is changing. Hanspeter Kriesi and his collaborators (1995), for example, have provided a comparative analysis of social movements for a short but significant historical phase. We can use their work to show the extent to which the mobilization of contemporary social movements resembles or varies across nations as a function of different sets of political opportunities. Table 3 shows the distribution of protest actions in four European countries from 1975 to 1989. Even without going into too much detail, we can stress a certain number of interesting patterns. First of all, movements that rest upon traditional cleavages are much stronger in France than in Germany, Switzerland, or the Netherlands, both in percentages and in the numbers of people mobilized. In the latter three countries, traditional cleavages had to a large extent been pacified, whereas in France they kept much of their political salience. As a result, the types of movements and issues based on the four cleavages stressed by Rokkan (regionalist movements, education, peasants’, and labor movements) play a greater role in the French context. This, according to the authors, leaves less space for the mobilization of the new social movements; their findings largely confirm this hypothesis. Furthermore, if we look at the number of participants involved in strike activity—the typical means of action used by the labor movement—we realize how strong the class cleavage in France was, compared to the other three countries. In general, a cross-national comparison of both the relative and absolute strength of European social movements shows that, at least for the four countries included in the study by Kriesi et al., their mobilization varies strongly across nations as well as across movements. Such variations depend



TABLE 3
DISTRIBUTION OF PROTEST ACTIONS IN FOUR COUNTRIES, 1975–1989

	<i>Percentage of actions^a</i>				<i>Number of participants^b</i>			
	<i>France</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Neth.</i>	<i>Switz.</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Neth.</i>	<i>Switz.</i>
<i>New social movements</i>								
Peace movement	4.4	18.7	16.9	6.0	14	111	92	25
Antinuclear energy movement	12.8	12.8	5.1	7.2	9	26	15	24
Ecology movement	4.4	11.3	8.0	10.6	2	11	5	16
Solidarity movement	9.2	15.0	17.7	16.0	15	13	19	19
Squatters' movement	3.0	13.4	14.1	18.4	0	6	5	14
Gay movement	0.8	0.3	2.0	0.7	1	0	4	0
Women's movement	1.5	1.7	1.6	2.1	2	1	3	3
Total new social movements	36.1	73.2	65.4	61.0	43	168	143	101
<i>Traditional movements</i>								
Student movement	4.8	1.5	2.2	0.2	23	4	7	0
Civil rights movement	1.5	1.3	0.6	2.7	0	2	0	3
Foreigners	2.5	4.2	7.1	8.5	1	2	3	8
Regionalist movements	16.6	0.1	0.0	10.6	4	0	0	11
Education	4.0	1.5	1.0	0.2	62	2	2	0
Peasants	6.6	0.3	1.3	0.8	3	2	1	1
Labor movement	10.1	4.3	9.2	3.7	33	19	19	15
Other left-wing mobilizations	2.0	3.9	2.4	2.4	1	3	14	4
Right extremism	3.3	3.8	0.7	0.6	1	0	0	0
Other right-wing mobilizations	2.6	1.9	1.0	2.0	1	7	2	4
Other mobilizations ^c	9.7	4.0	9.2	7.5	9	2	6	9
Total traditional movements	63.9	26.8	34.6	39.0	135	43	55	55
Grand total	100%	100%	100%	100%	178	211	198	156
(n)	(2132)	(2343)	(1319)	(1215)	(2076)	(2229)	(1264)	(1027)
Strikes	—	—	—	—	225	37	23	2
Grand total including strikes	—	—	—	—	403	248	221	158

Source: Adapted from Kriesi et al. (1995), pp. 20, 22.

^a Figures for the labor movement do not include strikes.

^b Sum of the number of participants in all unconventional actions per million inhabitants. Missing values have been replaced by the national median of the number of participants for a given type of event. Petitions and politically motivated festivals are excluded. Figures on strikes are based on statistics by the International Labor Organization (ILO).

^c Also includes countermobilization to new social movements (e.g. all actions directed against them).

very much on the specific political opportunity structures available at a given historical moment, but also on the organizational strength of movements (mobilizing structures), and on the resonance of their claims in the society at large (framing processes). In addition, the level of mobilization of single movements also depends on their relationship with political institutions over time. Certain contemporary movements, such as women's movements, have followed a pattern of institutionalization that has robbed them of much of their mobilization capacity and they therefore either become latent or tend to act through more conventional means, which are not captured by the kind of data gathered by Kriesi and his collaborators.

The prevailing structure of political opportunities in a given nation does not only affect the amount of collective action and the levels of mobilization of social movements; it also encourages the use of certain forms of action while discouraging others. We have an illustration of that by looking again at the data provided by Kriesi et al. (1995). Table 4 shows the distribution of protest in the same four countries broken down by form of action, ranging from the more moderate and conventional actions (the use of direct democratic instruments, petitions, and politically motivated festivals) to demonstrative actions (street demonstrations, rallies, public meetings, etc.), confrontational actions (boycotts, occupations, blockades, etc.), and violent actions (violent demonstrations, destruction of objects, bombing, etc.). The action repertoire of social movements is decidedly more radical in France and, conversely, more moderate in Switzerland. This difference, according to the authors, is largely explained by the different opportunity structures in the two countries as yielded by the combination of two of four dimensions highlighted by McAdam (1996): the degree of openness of the institutionalized political system and the state's capacity and propensity for repression. The closed and rather repressive (exclusive) French state has led social movements to make more frequent use of radical and often violent forms of action, while the open and facilitative (inclusive) Swiss state has channeled the protest into more moderate and conventional actions. In this picture, Germany and the Netherlands provide two intermediate cases, as they combine institutional openness and a propensity for repression. The action repertoire of social movements in these two countries, therefore, is more radical than in Switzerland but more moderate than in France.

Although limited to four European countries, this example shows that social movements and the power structures of the national state, which grew together in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, re-

main intimately linked. After World War II, as the world became increasingly interconnected and processes of economic globalization and cultural homogenization accelerated, several international and supranational institutions emerged. Like national ones, these institutions provide opportunities and incentives for contentious politics, and scholars have begun to document forms of transnational collective action and transnational social movements (see among others della Porta et al. 1999; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Smith et al. 1997). At least a part of this collective action transcends national boundaries to become transnational social movements, which have recurrently formed in Europe. The creation first of a European Economic Community, then of the European Union undoubtedly opened new opportunities for the mobilization of transnational actors and organizations. Yet, by the late twentieth century, such opportunities remained rather limited and did not stimulate the kind of popular contention that characterized the activity of earlier social movements. National states remained strong in most policy areas and still controlled their borders and exercised legal dominion within them; most mobilizing structures, collective action frames, political opportunities, and repertoires of contention were therefore available at that level. These are resources that even the controversial process of globalization was hardly able to counteract.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

European social movements must be studied as part of a broader spectrum of contentious political actions which includes other forms such as cycles of contention and revolutions. These are related phenomena that originate in similar circumstances but evolve in different patterns as a result of the interaction between social protest, state response, and the larger social and political environment. Jack Goldstone (1998) has elegantly formulated this idea as follows:

Contentious collective action emerges through the mobilization of individuals and groups to pursue certain goals, the framing of purposes and tactics, and taking advantages of opportunities for protest arising from shifts in the grievances, power, and vulnerability of various social actors. But the *form* and *outcome* of that action is not determined by the conditions of movement emergence. These characteristics are themselves emergent, and contingent on the responses of various social actors to the initial protest actions. (p. 143; emphasis in original)

As Charles Tilly has shown in his many publications on the subject, during the past few centuries Europe has witnessed a long-term structural transfor-



TABLE 4
DISTRIBUTION OF PROTEST ACTIONS BY FORM OF ACTION IN FOUR COUNTRIES,
1975–1989

	<i>France</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Netherlands</i>	<i>Switzerland</i>
Conventional ^a	2.6	4.9	4.2	21.7
Demonstrative	41.7	60.6	49.7	52.5
Confrontational	24.5	19.3	35.0	13.4
Violent	31.2	15.2	11.1	12.4
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
(n)	(2132)	(2343)	(1319)	(1322)

Source: Adapted from Kriesi et al. (1995), p. 50.

^a Direct democracy, petitions, and politically motivated festivals.

mation that involved at least two interrelated processes: the rise of capitalism and the success of the national state over other forms of government and social organization. This transformation fundamentally affected the interests, identities, opportunities, and organizations of Europeans, with two major consequences. On the one hand, the ways Europeans have engaged in contentious collective action, as well as its very targets, have been modified, leading, at some point during the nineteenth century, to the emergence of modern social movements. This change took place in close conjunction with the rise of electoral campaigns and interest-group politics at the national level (Tilly, 1995). On the other hand, the large-scale transformation of European society created a number of structural and cultural cleavages, which underpinned the mobilization of these movements and affected that of later movements.

We may identify four main movement families typical of twentieth-century Europe, most prominent in western Europe, but in part also in evidence in eastern Europe: (1) labor movements, (2) left-libertarian and new social movements, (3) movements of the extreme right, and (4) regionalist and

nationalist movements. The lines of conflict underpinning these areas of contention translated into actual social protest when political opportunities gave Europeans the incentives to mobilize and encouraged them to use their internal resources to form social movements. Sometimes the emerging challenges to the constituted authorities clustered into broad and widespread cycles of contention, as in 1848, 1968, or 1989. Sometimes such waves of generalized social unrest produced revolutionary outcomes. Most often, however, people's engagement to defend or promote their interests and identities remained within the boundaries set by the existing cultural and institutional parameters, the very same parameters that account for the similarities and variations in the mobilization of social movements across countries. In either case, by their actions Europeans have shown—and continue to show—that social protest is not an irrational response to situations of strain and deprivation, but is just one of the ways people have to defend or promote their interests and identities, sometimes the only way available. Indeed, as Karl Marx has forcefully shown, conflict is inscribed in the very structure of society.

See also other articles in this section.

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