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Books Reviewed

Berman, Paul (2005). *Power and the Idealists, or, the Passion of Joschka Fisher, and Its Aftermath.* New York: W.W. Norton.

Goodwin, Jeff and Jasper, James M., eds (2004). *Rethinking Social Movements: Structure, Meaning, and Emotion.* Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Penn, Shana (2005). *Solidarity's Secret: The Women Who Defeated Communism in Poland.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Tilly, Charles and Tarrow, Sidney (2007). *Contentious Politics.* Boulder, CO: Paradigm.

Varon, Jeremy (2004). *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Wiktorowicz, Quintan, ed. (2004). *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

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For better or worse, scholars who write about the origins, activities, and consequences of social movements often talk past each other. Babel occurs partly because social-movement scholars are trained in different disciplines with dissimilar analytic concepts, presumptions about relevance, and methodological techniques. In addition, one finds in every discipline competing (if not clashing) intellectual currents and political orientations, which contribute to the multiplicity of voices and perspectives on any topic. For instance, one can find social-movement analysts in departments of political science who are Marxists, mass-society theorists, world-systems theorists, subaltern-studies folks, post-cultural-studies scholars,

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feminists, neoconservatives, postmodernists, and rational-choice game theorists – you name it.

Finally, there is the obvious (but often overlooked) biological fact that scholars who study social movements vary tremendously in their ages. They, therefore, have been exposed to and are familiar with different real-world social movements, and their opinions differ as to what historical movements (the Nazis? the Civil Rights Movement? the Greens?) are paradigmatic or "typical." The disparate historical experiences lead individual scholars to consider alternative hypotheses about movement goals, tactics, and rhetoric as either self-evidently important, plausible, and deserving of further investigation, or patently far-fetched and not worth entertaining. This further fragments an already nonstandardized and conceptually eclectic literature.

Within this fairly fissiparous subfield, some theoretically novel and potentially seminal works have appeared over the past decade. Given the diversity in thinking about how best to study social movements, these books deserve to be mulled over as social-movement scholars continue their debate over how best to tackle their subject matter.

Ann Arbor Debates

To describe the recent evolution of any intellectual tradition, one must identify a starting point from which to tell the tale. In our case, the date of theoretical conception will be June 1988, when a large group of scholars attended a conference in Ann Arbor, Michigan on the topic of social-movement theory.

More than 100 kindred souls met to talk about the significance of social movements and about alternative theories and theoretical frameworks by which social movements could be studied. The University of Michigan and the American Sociological Association cosponsored the meeting. So, not surprisingly, it attracted a large number of sociologists. Still, between 20 and 35 percent of the attendees were either historians and political scientists or were trained in interdisciplinary cultural studies.

The title of the conference, "Frontiers of Social Movement Theory," reveals much about the tone of the meeting. Many participants believed that the study of social movements had undergone a sea change since the early Cold War. "Time to theoretically update and leave behind the intellectual fetters of the early- and mid-twentieth century," was a common refrain. As a result, most of the conference was devoted to assessing new vocabularies and analytic starting points for the study of social movements – a sort of review of contemporary best practices.

A flip side to the taking stock of current ideas was a joyful trashing of older, so-called "classic" social-movement scholarship produced between 1940 and 1965. This older literature viewed movements as the outcrops of rash decisions by emotionally desperate individuals who felt threatened by the speed and unfamiliarity of novel social changes, such as rapid urban growth and the spread of corporate capitalism. Allegedly, when exposed to unfamiliar change, individuals felt so vulnerable and threatened that they either joined or supported extreme movements, such as the communists, the Basque nationalists, or the Ku Klux Klan, in an attempt to lash out at the forces causing their older societies' deterioration. Participation in radical movements was, the older writers argued, a method for coping with private insecurities. Frightened people joined violent, impatient,

and intolerant groups to release pent-up frustrations and to secure the illusion of control in an out-of-control world.

The conferees at Ann Arbor believed that this older interpretation of movement activism was dismissive of the creativity and intelligence of activists and, therefore, distorted the logic and outcomes of contemporary movements, such as the Civil Rights Movement in the USA and the antiwar movements in Europe. According to those at Ann Arbor, movement activists were more emotionally stable and politically prudent and conciliatory than older analysts claimed. In addition, the confrontational rhetoric and activities of movements reflected limited opportunities for institutional political participation, not the rash vindictiveness of frightened individuals.

Time will tell if the decision among those at Ann Arbor to jettison earlier scholarly ideas was a rash move. In light of recent events – such as the effort to create a global civil society (compare Dvořáková in this issue), the ambiguous experiments with small-scale democracy in Chiapas and the Andes, and the formation of religiously inspired militias in the Middle East – the complex writings of both left- and right-leaning activists of the Cold War (such as Saul Alinsky and Eric Hoffer) and of refugees from Nazi-dominated Europe (such as Theodor Adorno, Hannah Arendt, and Eric Fromm) may contain more insights for US students of social movements than the confident critics at Ann Arbor were willing to concede. But few in 1988 worried about losing the wisdom of intellectual forebears. At the time, a decisive break from older modes of thought seemed the best way to move toward enlightenment.

Laughter and mirth filled the conference's main lecture hall, while grumbling and caucusing could be heard at the doorways and on the steps of the building. The scholars, most of whom were housed in residence halls, visited each other after the sessions, drank beer in the evenings, and shared with neighboring dorm mates their fears and hopes for social-movement research. On the whole, participants at the conference felt their spirits spiraling upward as they swapped stories about participation in movements and experiences with field research, even if theoretical consensus remained elusive. Indeed, at times no convergence of thought was obvious beyond suspicions of stale theories.

Several members of the audience, for example, loudly criticized the normally widely admired sociologist Doug McAdam, who during his presentation, insisted that social-movement activists should be seen as "rational actors" in their thinking. In addition, the two official commentators for McAdam's paper contended, amid periodic cheers and clapping from the audience, that his semi-rational choice position had underestimated the role of passion, of identification, and of other profound emotional and psychological processes within movements. Looking bashful, McAdam remarked that he once observed crowds at European punk-rock concerts showing their appreciation by spitting on performers. He then profusely thanked the commentators and the audience for their signs of approval. The crowd roared with laughter and applauded McAdam for his wit and good humor.

Another sign of a potentially serious theoretical division occurred when Marxist sociologist Jeffrey Paige spoke to the throng. He posed some predictable, yet provocative questions, such as "what happened to class analysis in the study of social movements? Have we forgotten the insights of Marxism?" Some in the audience vigorously nodded their heads in approval; some vigorously shook their

heads with disapproval; some listeners, sensing brewing sectarianism, impatiently looked at their programs to find the name of the next speaker.

After the meeting, two of the most visible participants at the conference (Aldon Morris and Carol Mueller) selected a subset of the conference papers and commentaries for a reader that would later be published under the title *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* (1992). The anthology ignored some of the dissident voices in Ann Arbor (such as Paige's critique of the gathering's largely non-Marxist spirit). The exclusion of dissenting statements is (in my opinion) unfortunate because it hides the anti-canonical spirit of much of the meeting. But as sociologist Myra Ferree (one of the contributors to the anthology) later explained to me, the purpose of the book was not to reflect the cacophony of voices at the conference. The purpose was to point to the emergence of a new scholarly consensus that many (including Ferree, Morris, and Mueller) believed was evident at the meeting.

In addition, Hank Johnston (another conference attendee) began editing a new academic journal, *Mobilization*. Johnston's goal (like Morris and Mueller's goal) was to promote what he saw as the emerging theoretical consensus at Ann Arbor, which was self-evidently superior to the thinking of earlier decades.

Political-Process Model

It would be dangerous to view the gathering at Ann Arbor as representing the orientation of the social-movement field as a whole. Many influential scholars who, during the 1970s and early 1980s, wrote about social movements, for instance political scientist Manuel Castells (1983), historians Sara Evans (1979) and Lawrence Goodwyn (1978), and sociologist Alain Touraine (1981), were absent from the Ann Arbor conference. Still, enough were in attendance to give most contributors to *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* and *Mobilization* confidence that they represented a new, relatively coherent, and superior school and paradigm. Soon, this post-Ann Arbor intellectual tradition would be known by such monikers as the "new social-movement theory," the "political-process theory," the "political-process approach," and the "political-process-and-political-opportunity model." For the sake of clarity, I (following the practice of Jeff Goodwin and James Jasper in *Rethinking Social Movements*) will use the adjective "political-process" when referring to this generation of writers and writings. What ideas were being promoted by the new journal and anthology?

First, those social-movement writers who either participated in or applauded these two publishing initiatives called for a radical intellectual reorientation in social-movement analysis (1) away from the investigation of dramatic forms of macro-social change (such as industrialization, capitalist expansion, and rapid urbanization) and their psychological consequences, and (2) toward microscopic, almost day-to-day analyses of political struggles and conscious strategizing. Stated differently, the political-process scholars wanted everyone to cease seeing movements primarily as semi-therapeutic responses by frightened individuals to large-scale social changes. Disruptive social change always occurs, and people are always disoriented and discontented (or so the proponents of the new style of reasoning argued). To understand where and when movements appear, one should, instead, explore immediate state-level and substate-level political contexts, such as the constitutional rules of the game, the ideological cohesiveness

of the government officeholders, and the impact of policy initiatives on citizens' expectations. These finer environmental changes involving government officials and arrangements (known in the aggregate as the "political process") provide momentary opportunities for collective action that aggrieved citizens can seize. Movements are not automatic responses to economic hard times and other nationwide and continent-wide social conditions. They grow during politically auspicious moments.

Second, contributors to the political-process approach talked at length about the tactical choices facing founders of movement organizations (who for a while were dubbed "movement entrepreneurs"). Political-process proponents insisted that leaders of movement organizations were shrewd (and neither blindly emotional nor inflexibly dogmatic) when deciding when, where, and how to take political risks and defy authorities. Indeed, leaders' decisions about the acquisition, deployment, and replenishing of material and social resources (such as money, office equipment, and communication networks) profoundly affect the fate of a movement. Seemingly mundane decisions, such as the solicitation of endorsements from well-heeled sympathizers, could have long-term impact on the survival and success of any movement, and therefore should become a focal point of analysis.

Finally, most contributors to and readers of the Morris and Mueller anthology or *Mobilization* embraced an instrumental understanding of culture. Culture is not an inherited tradition that is deeply embedded in how we see ourselves and that is difficult to doff. It is more like clothing, which can be worn (or discarded) by choice and according to one's immediate needs. This understanding of culture was partly inspired by the musings of Irving Goffman, who proposed that social scientists think about culture as a series of analytical "frames" that define our situations, options, and roles. According to Goffman, each person carries in his or her head a quiver of interpretive frames with which to negotiate daily situations. So, for example, to play golf, one needs an appropriate frame that explains how to comport oneself on a green, how to keep score, how to treat the caddy, and so on. Likewise, tipping a waiter or praying at a synagogue requires drawing on a frame that clarifies what may and may not be done.

According to the political-process writers, "frames" do in fact exist and, furthermore, can be constructed by ingenious movement leaders. Frames, moreover, are important political resources, because (political-process writers hypothesize) a movement entrepreneur will successfully interest and recruit followers only if he or she proposes cultural schemas and phrases that make sense to the potential audiences.

Political-process writers use the technical term "master frame" to denote a frame that rallies followers behind a movement organization or a coalition of movement organizations. A master frame helps movement participants locate scapegoats for sources of discomfort and discontent, stirs enough passion in listeners to prompt a willingness to act in concert, and proposes a mode of collective action that plausibly will solve the problem that audiences otherwise only vaguely sense. Movements tied to arcane and esoteric creeds, logically convoluted lines of reasoning, and technical manifestos will wither, say political-process writers. Astute movement leaders will construct frames from currently fashionable notions repackaging what is already in the air to mobilize large swaths of the public.

Feuding Over the New "Hegemony"

Since Ann Arbor, the political-process approach has been articulated, criticized, and repackaged. To some extent, it has become the focal point of theoretical discussion for social-movement scholars in the USA, and books that explicate political-process thinking, such as *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements* (McAdam et al., 1996), have become mainstays in graduate courses.

In *Rethinking Social Movements*, editors Jeff Goodwin and James Jasper present a dozen lucid and intelligent essays that debate the meaning and usefulness of the political-process model. Each chapter is readable and well organized. Collectively, the chapters are diverse enough to provide a reasonable balance of statements by both defenders and critics of the political-process model.

The critics of the political-process approach include both Goodwin and Jasper, who contend that the model is excessively narrow in the range of empirical experiences it can address and unnecessarily parochial in the political and cultural factors it entertains. Goodwin and Jasper, for instance, doubt that the political-process model can tell scholars much about the origins, workings, and achievements of cultural movements, such as the hip-hop movement and ethnic-pride campaigns, that try to change the public's notions of normalcy and deviance. Stated differently, the political-process model thinks exclusively about movements that attempt to change the behavior of the state and not about movements that attempt to change dominant cultural codes (or what Aristotle once called "notions of justice").

Goodwin and Jasper also believe that political-process thinkers, by seeing framing as an activity carried out by leaders only and not an activity that occurs daily among all sectors of society, ignore postmodern notions of cultural change and dissemination. Goodwin and Jasper ominously warn: "if process theorists continue to insist on remaining a distinct paradigm, resisting these trends, we expect that they will simply be displaced" (Goodwin and Jasper: 92).

Among the defenders of political-process thinking is political sociologist David Meyer, whose essay exudes great confidence. He declares that the political-process approach "has been winning the day within serious studies of social movements, progressively gaining more adherents and informing more empirical and theoretical treatments of cases, because it explains cases and organizes research better than the approaches it is supplanting" (Goodwin and Jasper: 54). He reminds readers that when judging the new model, they should keep in mind the many blind spots of previous styles of reasoning. Then the strengths of the new theorizing will become more evident. As to the criticism that political-process thinking is unable to say much of interest about cultural movements, Meyer concedes that the model is fairly silent on challenges to society's codes. But, he asks, is the fact that the political-process approach focuses on politics in the institutional sense a weakness? Is not a model that can make systematic collection of data and predictions about political events (narrowly understood) an amazing accomplishment in itself?

Finally, there are essays by some bridge-builders, such as Doug McAdam and Aldon Morris. These authors view the political-process model as a tentative step forward in thinking about social movements, but they also see grains of truth in the criticisms of the model and therefore argue that the political-process model must be revised and transcended in light of new ideas, formulations, and historical experiences.

Most of the contributors to the volume are affiliated with sociology departments (although a sprinkling of political scientists and public-policy scholars also contribute). Despite the prominence of a single discipline, each chapter is distinctive, reflecting the author's unique theoretical background and political past. Richard Flacks, for example, was a highly visible leader of Students for a Democratic Society during the 1960s. Not surprisingly, New Left presuppositions and concerns characterize his essay. In a sense, his chapter continues some of the neo-Marxist critique of political-process thinking that Paige made in Ann Arbor. Flacks, for instance, encourages readers to revisit *The Communist Manifesto*, which "remains the only full-fledged theory about the conditions and powers of movements that we have" (Goodwin and Jasper: 138). But Flacks' chapter is hardly formulaic or dogmatic. To the contrary, he asks for a more inclusive approach to theorizing about social movements than political-process theory offers: "I am criticizing first of all current efforts to rather rigidly define boundaries and a canon for the field ... Major topics have been marginalized or ignored" (Goodwin and Jasper: 151). He entreats readers to put aside current political-process presuppositions and return to more classic biographical studies of activists, their situations, and their choices; and to rethink the structural power (that is, economic and sociological constraints and inducements) that affects the fates of movements and movement activists.

A counterpoint to Flacks' almost nostalgic desire to revive older, class-sensitive ways of talking and thinking about social movements (the sort of research undertaken by highly influential English Marxists such as Christopher Hill and E.P. Thompson) is an essay by a much younger scholar, Charles Kurzman. Kurzman wrote a remarkable dissertation on the origins of the 1979 Iranian Revolution (later published as *The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran, 1977–79* (2004)) that daringly applied chaos theory to the study of social movements. In that work, Kurzman argued that on-the-ground circumstances were changing so quickly in 1978 that Iranians did not have a fixed sense of their priorities, options, or goals. They were so uncertain about their circumstances that they were reinventing their understandings of the world almost daily. In Kurzman's words: "the evidence of confusion is so overwhelming as to wash out all attempts at explanation" (2004: 168). In Goodwin and Jasper's volume, Kurzman continues to argue for greater use of postmodern and fluid notions of perception, cultural construction and reconstruction, and choice in the study of social movements. Mechanistic understandings of causation are far-fetched, Kurzman maintains, partly because identities and preference schedules are never as stable as causal theorists presume.

Other contributors to the anthology include three innovative and highly regarded cultural analysts (Deborah Gould, Fracesca Polletta, and Marc Steinberg), each of whom has attempted in previous writings to make sense of the complex cultural dimensions of the feminist and civil rights movements (in the case of Polletta), the anti-AIDs movement (for Gould), and 19th-century English labor movements (in the case of Steinberg). All three argue in their separate chapters that social movements are more culturally heterogeneous than the "master frame" notion implies. They also argue that cultural innovation is more ubiquitous (and therefore uncontrollable) within the population at large than the implicitly top-down notion of "movement entrepreneur" assumes.

Besides the half-dozen critical chapters about political-process analysis, there are roughly a half-dozen essays by prominent political-process thinkers. Some, such as Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, frankly do not see what the hubbub is about. Tilly and Tarrow argue in their separate essays that critics of the political-process model incorrectly see the model as rigidly mechanistic and top-down in its assumptions. To the contrary (both Tilly and Tarrow argue), the political-process model highlights the role of individual choice by movement entrepreneurs. By looking at the ways that movement leaders intentionally manipulate their environment, the approach highlights the place of actors in history. Moreover, the notion of frames and framing presumes a "bottom-up" image of culture because movement entrepreneurs cannot create master frames from whole cloth, but must attend to what everyday people already believe.

Those students of social movements who like their theoretical options to be straightforward, unambiguous, and unproblematic will find *Rethinking Social Movements* a challenging and perhaps even frustrating book. The anthology's open-ended format (with no side obviously "winning") makes evident the absence of a consensus among scholars of social movements about key terms (such as "frames" and "political process") and about the compatibility of political-process thinking with earlier (Marxist) and later (postmodern) intellectual traditions. On the other hand, some social-movement scholars do not mind messiness and ambiguity, and are energized by open-ended controversies. Such readers will probably enjoy how *Rethinking Social Movements* illustrates (and thus helps clarify) disputes over definitions and assumptions that continue to divide and vitalize the field.

New Iteration?

Shortly after the publication of Goodwin and Jasper's anthology, a primer appeared that was co-authored by Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow. The authors state at the outset and the conclusion (Tilly and Tarrow: xi–xii, 197–9) that their book is intended for use by novices to social-movement studies – presumably, advanced undergraduate students and early graduate students. Tilly (a historically oriented sociologist) and Tarrow (a political scientist) have written for so many years on social movements and have coined so many intriguing phrases (such as Tilly's "repertoires of protest" and Tarrow's "cycles of protest") that when they speak, old and young scholars alike listen.

Besides serving as a convenient summing up of some of the explicit assumptions, current definitions, and central theses of the political-process approach, *Contentious Politics* can be read as a temporary culmination of each author's long-standing interests. For a half-century, Tilly has studied the formation of the modern nation-state, the expansion of capitalism, and their combined impact on the structure of political conflict. In both *Contentious Politics* (Tilly and Tarrow: 20, 60–1, 66–7, 119) and his previous work, *Social Movements, 1768–2004* (Tilly, 2004: 147–53), Tilly not only distinguishes various types of popular politics (social movements versus bread riots versus land invasions, for example), but attempts to explain why social movements are (in his opinion) historically new phenomena that have appeared only after the establishment of the European nation-state and (in his opinion) are about to be superseded by other types of popular politics due to contemporary changes in global markets, developments in communication

technology, and the evolution of transnational governmental institutions. Students of feudal social movements who were raised on such works as Norman Cohn's *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (1961) will be puzzled by Tilly's efforts to tie the histories of social movements to the establishment of the modern state. "Why shouldn't peasants' uprisings against feudal arrangements be considered 'social movements'?" admirers of Cohn will ask. Younger generations of scholars, who are fascinated by the notion of "identity politics" and the impact of the internet and who believe that social movements will become more common in the future because of modern technology, probably will argue that Tilly's state-centered and heavily tactical-oriented definition of "social movements" is too narrow. But whatever the reader's response (agreement, disagreement, or both), Tilly's insistence that the notion of "social movement" be limited to particular historical settings will surely spur thinking about what we mean (and do not mean) by that slippery term.[1]

Meanwhile, Tarrow for about a half-century has written on interest-group politics in Western Europe. He always has enjoyed telling ironic stories, in which the consequences of actions diverge from what actors had expected. In *Contentious Politics* and his previous work, *The New Transnational Activism* (2005), Tarrow argues that even though some social-movement activists may believe (and hope) that "global issues" will prompt the establishment of worldwide social-movement organizations, most global issues (global warming, for instance) will spur local efforts that target local governmental systems and officials and that will not be easily coordinated across jurisdictional borders. In Tarrow's opinion, "building transnational social movements is immensely more difficult than carrying out the same task in domestic politics" (Tilly and Tarrow: 179). Therefore, "activists who seek to build transnational movements are mainly thrown back on a strategy of fielding small cadres of cosmopolitans at the international level with domestic groups in different countries. These face a host of different threats and opportunities, and their claims may only partially coincide with the transnational activists who attempt to coordinate their collective action" (Tilly and Tarrow: 179).

Every chapter in *Contentious Politics* is filled with interesting ideas and counterintuitive notions. The main drawback to the book lies in the writing. Although Tilly and Tarrow are incredibly creative and astute commentators who will teach every reader a lot about the challenges, contingency, and unpredictability of political action, they are not graceful writers. Sentences often mix metaphors: "Like domestic institutions that constitute national political opportunity structure, internationalization is like a coral reef around which national governments, firms, and nonstate actors gravitate" (Tilly and Tarrow: 177). In addition, the theme of "mechanism," around which they (Tilly and Tarrow: 10–11, 29, 188, 203, 205–8, 214–15) cluster their insights, is frustratingly vague. One cannot tell if a "mechanism" is what older sociologists meant by those crucial generic tasks a social organism must undertake to survive (that is, a social movement's "functions"), an inescapable policy decision that every actor must face (akin to what historically oriented social scientists sometimes call a "critical juncture"), or a tactical option that actors sometimes pursue, but sometimes do not.

In other words, to make sense of the book, one must read between the lines. Consequently, *Contentious Politics* is a nice instructional tool for advanced undergraduate and graduate courses. In those settings, it can serve as a springboard

for open-ended discussions (for example, "Do Tilly and Tarrow present more than one notion 'mechanism,' and why might this particular conceptual ambiguity be important?"). Because *Contentious Politics* is a dense book and ambitiously introduces a very large number of themes, concepts, and poetic images (such as "streams of contention" that can be "chopped up" (Tilly and Tarrow: 36–7, 87, 188, 204, 211)) in roughly 200 pages, it may disappoint at-home readers seeking a traditional, straightforward primer.

Applying Political-Process Theory to Latin America and the Middle East

Sometimes, scholars who study politics in particular regions of the world fail to take notice of what colleagues in more thematic subfields are attempting and accomplishing. This generalization is less true of social-movement studies.

In recent years, the post-Ann Arbor tradition of social-movement analysis has been adopted by a number of researchers who study Latin American politics. This is mildly surprising because area-studies scholars usually eschew concepts, terminology, and theories that have global application on the grounds that broadly applicable concepts oversimplify the experiences and understandings of people in specific times and locales. According to area-studies logic, to understand human conduct, one must be hypersensitive to the language, habits, and social arrangements of the local community under investigation. Grand theories rest on crude, globally applicable notions about human behavior and psychology that mislead the analyst when trying to figure out the purpose, motives, and situation of actual human beings. Area-studies scholars therefore try to employ historically specific terms and hypotheses, and flee from grand theorizing.

Yet, today a number of specialists on Latin American politics explicitly use political-process language. They do so for at least two reasons: to make local findings more accessible to nonspecialists and to use local findings to underline some empirical and logical difficulties with the model. Frank Afflitto and Paul Jesilow's *The Quiet Revolutionaries: Seeking Justice in Guatemala* (2007) offers one illustration of how the political-process model has been employed by scholars who focus on a specific region of the world, who need a set of concepts with which to communicate their findings to outsiders, and who, in the course of their presentation, challenge one or more aspect of the model. Afflitto and Jesilow discuss how the ruthlessness of the Guatemalan state has transformed the thinking of political prisoners who are punished for using movements to promote indigenous people's rights. Afflitto and Jesilow uncover social-psychological processes that are not central to the concepts and analysis of the political-process model, and they thereby reveal the limitations of the model. Nonetheless, they use political-process ideas about framing to cluster observations about the rise of a pro-prisoner movement under unfavorable political conditions and to create a coherent narrative.

Of course, not all students of Latin American politics use the political-process approach to make sense of social movements and other forms of popular contention. Some, such as Donald Hodges and Ross Gandy (2002), use Marxist theoretical tools. Others, such as Jan Rus et al. (2003), favor ethnographic tools and hypotheses about local client–patron systems and indigenous norms and routines. But political-process reasoning has made inroads in the subfield, as can be seen in the work of Clifford Bob (2005) on framing and the mass-media strategy of the Zapatistas.

The political-process model also seems to be making headway among researchers who study politics in regions other than Latin America. Consider the case of Quintan Wiktorowicz's *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach.* The title is a bit misleading. Wiktorowicz's stated aim is to use "social movement theory" (which, in fact, is the political-process approach that emerged after Ann Arbor) to make sense of a subset of non-western politics (Wiktorowicz: 3–4). Roughly a third of the essays, however, express reservations about the applicability of political-process reasoning to protest and other forms of popular politics in the Middle East. The title might be more accurate if it were recast as *Islamic Activism: Reflections on the Limits and Applicability of Political-Process Reasoning.*

The book's 12 chapters (excluding the introduction by Wiktorowicz and a foreword by Charles Tilly) are divided into three sections. The first section looks at the political tactics (especially violent tactics) that some Islamic organizations use; the second examines the social ties and political contexts behind various political events and nonevents; and the third section considers the process of strategic framing in countries with large Muslim populations.

The first four chapters are written by Mohammed Haffez, Quintan Wiktorowicz, Fred Lawson, and Glenn Robinson. The authors concur that the political-process model is extremely useful for explaining violence without recourse to an old-fashioned Orientalist stereotype about the intransigence and cruelty of religious fanatics. The authors, furthermore, draw upon the political-process model to make qualified optimistic assessments of politics in the territories that they examine (Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, and the West Bank and Gaza). Arguing that nonviolent protest is the preferred option in law-abiding democratic regimes and that lethal tactics are adopted only if opportunities for legal protest are unavailable, the authors speculate that if governmental authorities can resist the temptation to limit opportunities for peaceful citizen activism, then violence will ebb. The rub lies in the desire of the elites in Islamic societies: will they tolerate the nuisance of popular dissent and legalistic challenges after enjoying the prerogatives of lengthy periods of despotic rule?

The next four chapters investigate the diverse collective responses by citizens to grievances and tie the responses to local-level and short-term shifts in political rights and repression. In this section, questions about the relevance of the political-process approach begin to emerge. The authors, who focus on kinship traditions, women's clubs and friendship networks, merchant associations in the bazaars, and party coalitions, differ in their expressions of satisfaction with the political-process approach. Jillian Schwedler, in her analysis of party politics in Yemen, contends that close observations of political circumstances provide more insight as to the goals and activities of emerging popular parties than do exegeses of party pronouncements. The other three authors (Diane Singerman, Janine Clark, and Benjamin Smith) are less convinced that the political-process model helps an analyst understand interesting features of Islamic popular politics. They, for example, maintain that the political-process model is fairly tangential for understanding how and why charity campaigns, merchant boycotts, and other grassroots politics emerge in Muslim countries. In these authors' opinions, long-standing local traditions of collective action are probably more important than short-term shifts in political circumstances, which is what the political-process model stresses. In-depth and ethnographic knowledge of local customs and norms is a prerequisite for understanding popular political behavior, from shanty town

projects to student marches. Changes in day-to-day political circumstances can, of course, tell an observer about some of the *grievances* that motivate people to engage in politics in Islamic societies, but in the opinions of Singerman, Clark, and Smith, immediate political context says little about the timing and types of collective action that will appear.

The final four chapters of *Islamic Activism* look closely at the notion of strategic framing, and the authors are openly ambivalent about the usefulness of the political-process approach. In their separate chapters, Carrie Wickham, Gwenn Okruhlik, M. Yasvuz, and Charles Kurzman note causal factors that shape popular politics in Islamic society, but that are seldom highlighted in the political-process literature and that apparently belie the importance of "framing" by movement entrepreneurs. Wickham, fearing an excessively idealist approach to the history of popular politics in Islamic societies, urges analysts not to minimize the concrete economic interests that inform residents' choices about whether and when to support a movement and embrace its master frame. Okruhlik similarly doubts that master frames affect popular political behavior independently of concrete political grievances and problems, such as abusive police behavior. Yasvuz sees movements within Islamic societies as too internally heterogeneous in terms of goals and tactics to be explained by reference to only political contexts, movement entrepreneurs' rationality, or master frames. Yasvuz recommends an ethnographically rich model of social movements that is sensitive to the fragile coalitional nature of any Islamic movement. Kurzman, whose essay closes the anthology, wonders if the political-process assumptions about leaders' instrumental rationality and the strategic motivation behind frame-making make sense in the Middle East and other Islamic areas of the world. Perhaps a different psychological model better approximates the emotions and reasoning of activists and other subjects. Kurzman therefore urges researchers to ignore the notions of master frames and leaders' rationality and, instead, to listen carefully to the statements made by Islamic activists about their motivations, goals, and strategies.

Beyond the Political-Process Model

So far, we have reflected on recent books that either challenge, expand upon, or apply the political-process model. The model is not the only intellectual game in town, however. The final three books we review employ assumptions and styles of reasoning that the political-process literature either (at best) seriously downplays or (at worst) neglects entirely. Their existence suggests that the political-process approach might be passing its zenith of influence, and other ways of thinking may soon burst forward. Interestingly, most of these new theories echo styles of reasoning that political scientists may have forgotten amid the enthusiasm over political-process analysis.

Shana Penn's *Solidarity's Secret* is part of an ongoing tradition of feminist movement analysis that stretches back for decades and that includes such descriptively rich works as historian Sara Evans' *Personal Politics* (1979) and political scientist Martha Ackelsberg's *Free Women of Spain* (1991). Feminist analysis attempts to embed the study of movement politics within the long-term history of gender relations within a society. Movements do not exist in a sexual vacuum, the basic argument runs. Gendered divisions of labor (legitimated by myths and reinforced by the exclusion of women from certain forms of power and by their adaptive

efforts to create spheres of autonomy) affect what women do in movements and, in turn, affect the movement's destiny.

Penn argues that women in Poland found themselves linked to a particular social role (that of saintly protector) that facilitated their patient and quiet service to Solidarity. Ironically, this gendered expectation enabled the movement to survive during the long period of martial law that preceded Poland's transition to democracy, partly by imparting to women the courage to risk running a vast underground publication system and partly by inhibiting male police officers from intruding on the culturally defined weaker sex and vigorously investigating the subversive behavior of female activists. Besides describing how women hid male fugitives, Penn describes in detail how women collected material resources, produced copy, and distributed pamphlets and newsletters during the years of repression. She also reports that some women attempted to influence the agenda of the movement, so that it considered matters other than market reform. According to Penn, those Polish women who carried out seemingly routine tasks (say, smuggling ink for the printing of handbills) made important decisions that shaped the movement's agenda, recruitment, and fate, and, in turn, affected the democratization process within Poland. Although she does not tackle the topic of the political-process model, her bottom-up, cultural-myth, and unanticipated-consequences approach diverges strongly from the political-opportunity, movement-entrepreneur, and master-framing approach of the political-process writers.

Penn is a political scientist with a deep interest in how often-ignored gendered power relations shape high-profile political struggles over constitutional arrangements. Jeremy Varon is a historian who is fascinated with how governmental decisions about international relations and constitutional rights inadvertently influence younger adults' sense of what can and ought to be done. In *Bringing the War Home*, Varon uses a paired-comparison method to generate his hypotheses about public policy and protest among younger citizens. He juxtaposes the sometimes similar and sometimes different foreign-policy histories of the USA and West Germany during the mid-20th century, and simultaneously looks at the different trajectories of the Weather Underground and the Red Army Faction during the 1960s.

According to Varon, memories of the political past (not just "facts" about the past, but feelings of guilt, shame, pride, and innocence) largely determine what ideas will attract activists and public sympathy. The Holocaust and Nazi regime, for example, had a significance for the political culture of German youths that resulted in a more violent youth movement in West Germany than that in the USA during the 1960s. Other factors, such as government responses to movement activities, also shaped the movements' fates, of course. But for Varon, the impact of immediate political context is always mediated by deeper cultural habits and prejudices, which were generated by past deeds.

Among the several secondary factors that Varon considers relevant for understanding the shaping of the thinking, choices, and comportment of movement activists are what academics today often call "popular culture" – that is, widely disseminated narratives, villains, and icons (the comic book character Lex Luthor and Herman Melville's fictitious Captain Ahab, for instance). Whereas the advocates of the political-process model prefer to think about the culture in terms of movement leaders strategically constructing master frames, Varon thinks of culture as a broad uncoordinated milieu, in which various moral

narratives are conveyed and comingled daily through song, story, and visual images. According to Varon, to understand the behavior of movement activists, one must take mass entertainment seriously (for example, listen closely to the lyrics of radio tunes), for these scattered and seemingly innocuous influences are central to how humans see themselves and their options, and therefore to what they choose to do.

Although Varon is a historian, he is well versed in 20th-century sociological and psychological theories. This enables him to compose multiple-paragraph digressions, where he analyzes and assesses arguments about the causes of postwar radicalism by such seminal thinkers as Michel Foucault, Kenneth Keniston, and Herbert Marcuse. Varon also periodically employs concepts and typologies advanced by Karl Marx and Max Weber. His theoretical eclecticism is refreshing. Many proponents of the political-process approach, in their passion to systematize research, urge readers to dismiss competing modes of interpretation (especially the pre-1970 "classic" models of social movements). Varon, in his theoretical digressions, reminds his readers that there are many interesting ideas about social movements that one can ingeniously apply to the present. As a result, one leaves his descriptive history aware of a host of social, economic, and psychological theories and concepts that many modern social-theory analysts ignore.

Paul Berman's *Power and the Idealists* is an appropriate closing text for this article because it looks at the history of social-movement activism from the 1960s to the current US occupation of Iraq. Berman, a public intellectual who regularly contributes to *Dissent* magazine and teaches writing at New York University, explores the ideas of a half-dozen European social-movement activists who, as young men, were involved in the street demonstrations of the 1960s, who participated in the European Green movement of the 1970s and 1980s, and who later protested against human-rights violations and genocide during the 1990s and early 2000s.

Power and the Idealists is a trade paperback, written for the public at large and not only for members of the academy. Perhaps for this reason, Berman does not hide his own public-policy convictions behind a façade of scholarly neutrality. He believes that a new wave of totalitarian regimes and authoritarian mentalities has appeared since the collapse of the Soviet bloc. International intervention therefore is called for – not only humanitarian intervention by nongovernmental organizations, but military actions by western states to prevent genocide and other large-scale atrocities.

Berman's work, nonetheless, should not be read as "journalism" about current events and crises, such as Kosovo. The book is first and foremost an intellectual history that traces the construction and application of modern ideologies. His method recalls an older tradition of social-movement analysis that was popular among academic political theorists between the mid-1950s and the mid-1970s. In those days, students of revolutionary movements and regimes, such as Stephen Cohen (1973), Alfred Meyer (1957), and Michael Walzer (1965), analyzed the thinking of movement leaders, such as Nikolai Bukharin, Vladimir Ilich Lenin, and Oliver Cromwell, by first providing biographical summaries and then unpacking the assumptions and implications of the leaders' ideological pronouncements. The statements made by movement leaders were not treated as strategically convenient "frames," opportunistically designed to attract followers. They were treated instead as evidence of comprehensive modes of reasoning that were sincerely

believed in and that could trap the believer into a series of actions that were self-destructive as well as fatally harmful to others.

Berman applies this style of ideological analysis to the speeches and written statements of Joschka Fischer, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Bernard Kouchner, Adam Michnik, and others of the generation of 1968. He also talks from time to time about the ideas of older European leftists who briefly enjoyed popularity during the Cold War. Thus, a reader of Berman's book who might be too young to recall the classic arguments of Regis Debray about "foco" will discover a useful extended analysis by Berman – just one of his dissections of the many revolutionary theories embraced by the European left during the past 40 years.

As a patient exposition of the complexity, depth, and originality of contemporary "left" political thought, Berman's is a remarkable book that conceivably could prompt a revival of the sort of doctrinal scholarship that Alexander George's (1969) discussions of "operational codes" launched toward the end of the Cold War. In the writings of both Berman and George, the prose is exciting, and the cases are immediately relevant.

One drawback to Berman's work involves his frequently cavalier and dismissive generalizations about how *groups* of movement activists think and behave, such as the Shining Path and the Basque nationalist group ETA. He shows no familiarity with the work of scholars of these movements, such as Colin Harding (1988) and Robert Clark (1984), on the doctrinal divisions and political debates within these and other movements that Berman considers blindly dogmatic. Unfortunately, when he talks about leftists collectively, such as the Guevarists, the Red Army Faction, and the "hippie-dippies" (Berman: 51), Berman tends to demonize rather than analyze. Even non-left movements, especially those in the Middle East, are described as irrational and fanatical, with movement militants suffering from "paranoid beliefs" and "delirious ideals" and joining "ghoulish cults" (Berman: 296). Conversely, Berman is at his academic best when he sympathetically unpacks the logic uniting the political positions and concepts that a particular individual holds.

A second (and perhaps related) drawback is Berman's vagueness about how political ideas originate. At times, he seems to adopt a quasi-Freudian position – that the political behavior of our biological parents shapes the ideas about authority that we will embrace as adults. Other times, he seems to argue that fresh ideas about political action appear out of the blue, as spontaneous epiphanies, whenever an activist is sincerely trying to move from utopian theory to practice. Sociologically oriented readers will find these statements, alternating between fatalism and complete voluntarism, simplistic if not far-fetched. Perhaps more importantly, by failing to explore in a detailed, systematic manner the genesis of a person's ideas, Berman arguably misreads the unstated premises, intentions, and logic of the ideologue.

Like any serious work, there are parts of Berman's argument that could be clarified and fleshed out. Still, his book offers readers a valuable overview of recent shifts in the ideological debates within the western left. It thereby helps readers recognize and appreciate today's substantively new types of movements, which are more state centered in tactics, more government interventionist in vision, more antisocialist in program, and more human-rights oriented in moral philosophy than were the "New Left" movements at the end of the Cold War.

Conclusion

Over the past two decades, social-movement theory in the USA has momentarily cohered around the political-process approach. Paradoxically, some important scholars within the American academy have criticized that approach, even as scholars in traditional areas studies have increasingly utilized it. For some, the political-process approach may be on the verge of extinction. For others, it is about to flourish, via new applications and formulations.

In any case, political-process reasoning is not the only theoretical option available today. Interesting research is being carried out by scholars who do not rely on the political-process model and who, instead, draw on the venerable conventions of feminist studies, doctrinal analysis, and paired analysis of historical cases. In addition, there is the ongoing work by Marxists, such as Paige (1975, 1997), and the quasi-anthropological political ethnographers, such as Rus et al. (2003).

So, the story of the evolution of social-movement theory is not one of heroic triumph by an intrepid group of scholars who rebel against out-of-date forebears. Some scholars are flocking to political process. A goodly number are not. Like the apocryphal story of the tower of Babel, it may even be the case that scholars are leaving the remarkable building site before the new intellectual edifice has been completed.

The early 21st century is, perhaps, the worst of times for those students of social movements who had hoped to uncover a single set of unquestioned concepts and themes upon which to design research projects. Too many competing paradigms exist. But for maverick scholars who prefer not to be hemmed in conceptually or theoretically and who enjoy roaming across a wild intellectual landscape, this may be the best of times.

Note

1. Shortly after this review article was written, Charles Tilly passed away. His groundbreaking concepts and theories about state building, collective action and social movements, and comparative social history as a distinctive mode of analysis are too many to enumerate and assess here, much less in a note. He had a remarkable knack for making 19th-century intellectual history relevant to late 20th-century audiences, and for coining phrases ("repertories of action" and "WUNK displays") that inspired others to pursue novel lines of reasoning. His enthusiasm for teaching graduate students and mentoring historians and social scientists will be sorely missed.

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