CHALLENGERS AND STATES: TOWARD A POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we employ research and thinking in political sociology regarding states to issues in the analysis of social movements. Social movements are often defined with respect to their challenge to states, yet social movement theory rarely relies on political sociological insights into states. We redress this balance by discussing the process by which states influence social movements and social movements attempt to influence states. We begin criticizing how states are conceptualized by way of "political opportunity." From there we discuss the likely impact on movements of different aspects of states, including the structure of authority in the polity, democratization, electoral rules, bureaucratization, and state policies. We conclude by discussing conceptual and methodological issues regarding the impact of social movements on states. We suggest that scholars need to think of movements more in terms of challengers seeking to gain collective goods through states.

Social movements and challengers are often defined by their relationship to the state. They make claims on the state on behalf of groups or issues that are disadvantaged in politics. Yet scholars of social movements do not adequately

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conceptualize states and employ these conceptualizations in their analyses – whether states are argued to be part of the explanation of aspects of social movements or whether states constitute the object of explanation.

One problem is conceptual. Scholars of social movements typically address the "political opportunity structure" rather than states and other political institutions. But political opportunities are often conceptualized in ways that are essentially ambiguous and disconnected from other conceptual developments in social science, especially those regarding the state. Another problem is theoretical. Scholars employing political opportunity often make insufficient theoretical connection between specific aspects of these contexts and the aspects of social movements that they are supposed to explain, making the political opportunity thesis difficult to appraise for empirical researchers. Scholars who examine the consequences of social movements are also centrally concerned with state outcomes and processes, as states are often the targets of collective action. But they, too, often have an underdeveloped conception of states, focusing on the success or failure of challengers in achieving their stated goals or gains in power that social movements may achieve. Neither systematically theorizes or examines impacts on states.

In what follows we address the potential applicability of state concepts current in the political sociology and relevant political science literatures to theory and research on social movements. We do not reject claims about the important influence of political contexts on social movements – the key insight in the political opportunity literature – but argue instead that if scholars making these claims would invoke concepts regarding the state, it would be easier to specify arguments and to ascertain whether they had empirical credence. There are many state concepts appropriate to the study of social movements, as the academic literature on comparative social policy indicates, including the structure of authority in the polity, democratization, electoral rules, bureaucratization, and state policies. We employ some of these in our discussion of issues surrounding the impact of states on social movements and the impact of social movements on states.

We see the impact of states on social movements as a recursive process: States influence social movements, which always are begun in a political context that favors action in some times and places rather than others, that favors certain forms of organization and lines of actions over others and certain types of political identities over others. States tend to dwarf social movements in terms of size, resources, and power, and states influence movements, especially those making claims through states. We work from the premise that aspects of states will influence challengers' mobilization, forms of organizations, and lines of action by affecting the likelihood that they will be

productive. In this process we often derive expectations that diverge from those employing political opportunity concepts, but have some currency in studies of social movements.

Social movements in turn attempt to influence states by mobilizing people and resources and claims around specific strategic lines of action. Challengers contest state policies, laws, bureaucracies, rules, and institutions in order to make gains for those whom they represent. This collective action in turn often influences the state. Although we do not address theoretical arguments about the impact of social movements on states, we provide a framework for understanding the potential impact of social movements on states – a necessary condition for appraising theoretical arguments. Our main call is for scholars to examine the same aspects of states deemed important by political sociologists and make connections between them and collective benefits sought by social movements.

FROM POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES TO STATES

Before going further it is worth saying more about challengers and states. By "social movements" or "challengers" we mean politically disadvantaged groups engaged in sustained collective action to secure their claims (Jenkins, 1995). Following Tilly (1978), we distinguish them from "members of the polity." In democratic polities, challengers typically mobilize participants, to publicize their cause and gain support and influence, more so than by mobilizing pecuniary resources. "Social movement mobilization" or social mobilization is the amassing of resources by challengers to engage in "collective action" – action intended to gain benefits from which members of the intended beneficiary group cannot be readily excluded. Given their outsider status, challengers are likely to engage at least occasionally in "unconventional" (Dalton, 1988; Kriesi et al., 1995; Clemens, 1997) as well as "non-institutional" (McAdam, 1996) or "disruptive" (Kitschelt, 1986) or "transgressive" (McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, 2001) collective action, but the choice of different forms of collective action is itself important to explain (McAdam et al., 1996).

We define "states" as sets of political, military, judicial, and bureaucratic organizations that exert political authority and coercive control over people living within the borders of well-defined territories. States engage in action or "policy," including taxation, social spending, and regulatory policy, that is official, legitimate, binding, and backed by the aforementioned organizations. "Democratic states" are defined as those states whose leaders, forms, and policies are decided with key participation and input from everyday people. In

such a state, suffrage is relatively inclusive, citizens have rights to associate, and the state is significantly responsible to elected officials (Dahl, 1971).

Political Opportunities in Theory and Research

The literature on social movements rarely refers to states as such, and rarely to political parties, interest groups, and other political sociological concepts, but instead focuses on the "political opportunity structure" or political opportunities. Political opportunities are seen as key determinants of the rise of social movements and various outcomes related to social movements, such as the form they might take and the types of action they might engage in, the political identities that form from them. However, as defined and employed political opportunity is not well suited for analysis.

One problem is that political opportunity is typically defined in an ambiguous fashion. Notably, the concept merges aspects of the state with other aspects of political contexts, as well as different political actors. This hinders its utility in analyzing social movements, especially those contending in relatively democratic political systems. For these polities political sociologists and political scientists have made far more refined distinctions about aspects of the polity, which are mainly ignored. Thus it makes it difficult as well to connect studies of social movements to political sociology or political science to formulate hypotheses. Perhaps this is because opportunity arguments were initially designed to explain revolutionary movements and revolutions as well as the more limited movements that appear in democratic polities (Tilly, 1978; cf. Tarrow, 1996). Those arguing about the importance of political opportunities or political contexts to social movements do not take them seriously enough. There is much discussion of broad categories such as "institutional political systems," "authorities," "elites," "input" and "output" structures. But there is not enough about states, bureaucracies, political parties, and other standard concepts in political sociology (for some critiques and discussions of the concept, see Goodwin & Jasper, 1999; Polletta, 1999).

A second ambiguity centers on what political opportunity is supposed to influence about social movements and why. Political opportunity has been claimed by different proponents to explain the timing of the emergence of movements, their growth, and decline, their level of mobilization, the form of mobilization, movement strategies and actions, movement "behavior," and movement "outcomes," or the impact of movements. If one theoretical argument explains much of what scholars want to know about related phenomena, there is more power to it. Yet there has not been enough thought given to the reasoning for why political opportunities or contexts (Rucht, 1996; Kriesi, 1996), as they are perhaps more usefully termed, would influence all these different types of outcomes. Also, the different phenomena to be explained are often not conceptualized well enough. In addition, the various lists of overarching opportunities have not been connected to specific dependent variables.

McAdam's (1996) influential review of political opportunity provides a thoughtful list of what he calls the "dimensions" of political opportunity, based on the careful reading of the work of like-minded scholars (Brockett, 1991; Kriesi et al., 1992; Rucht, 1996; Tarrow, 1996). These dimensions include the following: the relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system; the stability of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity; the presence of elite allies; the state's capacity and propensity for repression. In *Power in Movement* (1998), Sidney Tarrow provides a similar list of political opportunity concepts, with an emphasis on dynamic and proximate influences on social movements.

An advantage of McAdam's and Tarrow's similar definitions is that they might be employed in a parsimonious theory or sub-theory to explain important aspects of movements. McAdam suggests, for instance, that the four dimensions might influence a number of dependent variables, including the timing of the emergence of social movements and their impacts as well as social movement forms. McAdam (1996, p. 31) notes that it is critical for any political opportunity theory (or any theory for that matter) to be explicit about "*which dependent variable* we are seeking to explain and *which dimensions of political* opportunity are germane to that explanation [original emphasis]." To his credit McAdam does make a few specific claims about the influence of a few of the dimensions on types of movements. He argues that elite allies more likely spur reform movements, while divisions among elites and declines in repressive capacities or abilities will encourage revolutionary movements. Otherwise, though, he does not specify linkages between the specific opportunities and outcomes, or indicate reasoning for why the political opportunities might influence the specified outcomes. Assuming that political opportunity means only these four dimensions does not make the situation measurably better, because McAdam does not go far in saying what each of the large categories implies or linking the four opportunities to specific outcomes. It is left up to others to interpret the categories, make the linkages to dependent variables, and provide the reasoning for the linkages. But as outlined the four dimensions are open to many interpretations and provide an uncertain guide to researchers who might be seeking to develop such a theory or appraise arguments based on it.

The dimensions of political opportunity employed by McAdam and Tarrow that involve aspects of the state share the problem of being difficult to appraise in research. Two of McAdam's four dimensions, for instance, refer explicitly to the state. The first dimension, the "institutionalized political system" is a relatively inclusive category that might conceivably incorporate any and every aspect of the state or polity, as well as the political party system. States and parties and everything to do with them are merged into one catch-all concept that might refer to constitutional strictures, electoral rules, laws or practices concerning political association or the franchise, rules or practices surrounding legislative bodies, the permeability of executive institutions by groups, the existence of different sorts of executive institutions, laws concerning the rights of political parties, political constraints on creating political parties, the nature of the party system, policies in existence, and no doubt other things, too.

What it means for institutionalized political systems to be open or closed is also left open to interpretation. Given the number of phenomena that might fall under this concept, it would be difficult for a researcher to start with this idea and try to show that in any case of a mobilization or potential impact of a movement that some aspect of the political system was not open or opening up. Those studying movements in relatively democratic political systems may have a specific difficulty in employing this concept. Such political systems are in a basic sense open all of the time. At least there is no formal bar to social movement activity. The situation is no doubt different in non-democratic and under-democratized polities, where even relatively well off groups may have little access to politics. Even there the idea might be drawn out further than it is. In short, it is not clear what political phenomena, aside from social movements, stand outside the institutionalized political structure and what important openings and closings in it might be.

Similar concepts by other scholars do not fill in the blanks. Kitschelt's (1986, pp. 63–64) influential idea of political opportunity or contexts focuses on "system-wide political properties" understood as "political input and output structures." Although they are defined, they are widely drawn, including many aspects of states and political parties. Each structure is conceptualized in a way that is somewhat murky. Political input structures, for instance, refer to the "openness of political regimes to new demands" and include four components. The first comprises the number of political parties, factions, and groups that articulate demands in electoral politics, with greater numbers meaning more openness. The second is the degree to which legislatures are autonomous in policy-making. The greater the autonomy, the more access to movements, because legislatures are more electorally accountable than the executive. The third concerns patterns of intermediation between interest groups and the executive branch; the more fluid the connections the more open the political system. The fourth concerns "mechanisms that aggregate demands," which are not delineated, but could include a wide variety of actors and organizations. In short, openness includes a whole host of characteristics involving state authority, state actors, parties, interest groups, which may not hang together in given cases at different times, and some may stand in causal relation to others.

McAdam's fourth dimension of political opportunity concerns repression, which is also relevant to states, and presumably works against the possibilities of social movements. McAdam focuses on the capacity and propensity for repression, which together can be seen as the components of the expected value of repression. The capacities for repression constitute something like the total amount of repression available and the propensity to engage in repression is analogous to the probability that the state will engage in repression. Operationally speaking, the capacity for repression would no doubt depend on any number of matters, including people, materiel, and technology. How much repression might exist at any place or time would be difficult to specify, though, a problem analogous to what constitutes a resource in resource mobilization theory. In most current democratic political systems, the capacity for repression no doubt is greater than ever before.

The propensity for repression is more difficult to get a handle on, however. It doubtless depends, at least partly, on issues regarding access to the political system. As political systems become more democratized, presumably, this propensity decreases. However that may be, in most democratized polities over the last two centuries, the two components of repression seem to have gone in opposite directions. To ascertain whether this conceptual variable is moving one way or another would depend on what matters more, the capacity or propensity. Is there any way to tell, for instance, in the United States over the last century, whether the capacity for repression has increased in ways that outstrip the decline in the propensity to employ repression? But if an analyst waits until repression is actually employed this would mean a retrospective analysis. And even then there is a large loophole. If repression is employed, but not to the point of halting mobilization, it could easily be claimed that the propensity to repress was not great enough. It would be helpful to provide some theoretical guidelines about which matters more and the likely conditions that spur the use of repression.

In short, the ambiguities in the definition of political opportunity and the connections between political opportunity and what it is meant to explain lead to several problems in scholarship. Translating the political opportunity concept into specific causal statements and hypotheses susceptible to empirical

analysis is not easy to do rigorously. Because researchers can define political opportunities to be almost whatever they want about political contexts facing challengers, in practice they can apply the concept in highly varied ways to various outcomes. And because as conceptualized political opportunity is not connected to other conceptual developments in political sociology it is difficult for those working in the area of social movements to make sense of their findings with regard to studies of related phenomena.

Moving Beyond Political Opportunity

Some of these scholars have advanced the project, however, and there have been a number of helpful developments, such as in the recent work by Charles Tilly (1998) and McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001). In this work they address aspects of the state, such as democratization and state capacities. Tilly (1998) is concerned with the connections between regime type and contentious politics. His analysis goes beyond the claim that states affect the likelihood or the character of popular mobilization. Tilly sketches out several components of regimes that combine to describe the character of any given regime. These components are intended to serve as standards against which regimes can be compared. They can also be a common starting ground for social movements' scholars to measure the impact of mobilization on the state.

The first of the five elements Tilly (1998) identifies is state capacity, which is defined as the impact of the state on activities and resources. The second element, breadth of the polity membership, ranges from a single ruler as polity member to the case in which each person under the state's jurisdiction belongs to a polity member. The third, equality in polity membership, is a measure of the distribution of access to the governmental agents and resources. Fourth, the strength of collective consultation among polity members combines how binding the consultation of polity members is, and how effectively it controls policy and resources. The final element is the amount of protection provided from arbitrary actions by governmental agents. These five components, and the various combinations of them can be used to represent the entire range of regime types, from dictatorships and military rule, to various forms of democracy and constitutional governments.

Because the last four of Tilly's five elements combine to form a composite measure of democratization, the two important factors for Tilly are state capacity on the one hand, and democratization on the other. These elements allow the comparative analysis of regimes and the amount and type of contention that occurs within the various regime types. For example, more democratic states may encourage the formation of alliances between polity

members and non-members; states that are not democratized may encourage revolutionary struggles. These large-scale conceptualizations of regime types and contention map out the entire spectrum of contention and states. This is useful for global comparisons, as well as being a key analytical tool for understanding processes of shifting regimes. However, the broad scope of this approach makes it difficult to address factors that may be important in understanding those aspects of the state which impact contention in states with relatively similar regime types. This model does not shed much light on which aspect of democratic states impact the social movements that emerge within them, nor on the ways that we might address the impact of these movements on these states.

In *Dynamics of Contention*, McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001) employ Tilly's concept of the state as having the two key dimensions of state capacity and democratization. They further clarify the concept "state capacity" by breaking it down into a combination of four dimensions: direct rule, penetration of geographic peripheries by central states, standardized state practices and identities, and the means of implementing policies. States are brought into focus as important objects of study, a significant improvement over standard political opportunity structures approaches. They discuss regimes as both targets of movements and as actors that construct opportunities. Democratization is a spectrum along which states rest, and sometimes, through processes of contention, they change their place on the scale. But when discussing social movement interaction with the state, these authors revert to vague concepts of weak vs. strong states, assistance from elites, and trust networks. Whereas McAdam and his colleagues refine the notion of opportunity to demonstrate that the events which alter political contexts are not arbitrary structural shifts which are to be noticed and acted upon by contenders, they stop short of providing a clear conceptualization of those aspects of the state which are important to social movement analysis.

These works indicate that the social movements literature is moving toward more conceptual clarity. Each of these works identifies elements of the state that are can be useful in both comparative and historical accounts of social movements' impact on the state. They also provide a set of concepts that can be seen as a useful common ground for scholars of mobilization to begin to test their claims. These recent developments in the social movements literature are promising, and their claims that states influence the character of mobilization are convincing. The great variation in state capacities, political participation, polity membership which these models capture emphasize the differences in the nature of social mobilization between states that have different levels of development. However, even among democratic states with high capacities

there is a great deal of variation in states that is likely to influence social movements. It is helpful, but not enough to say that overall changes in states toward democratization and greater capacities have led to different sorts of challengers that are broadly similar across states. Scholars need to go further in identifying the elements of the state that influence social movements' emergence, forms, lines of actions, identities, and claims.

THE IMPACT OF STATES ON SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The institutional turn in political sociology began in the 1980s and has focused on the role of states and other political institutions on political outcomes of importance (reviews in Skocpol, 1985; Steinmo et al., 1992; Thelen, 1999; Clemens & Cook, 1999). As with other emphases in political sociology, including various Marxist, cultural, and rational choice approaches, the theorizing and research is uneven and has gone further in some subfields rather than others. The institutional literature on the impact of states and political institutions has gone fairly far in explaining the development of social policies or what are sometimes called "welfare states" (see review in Amenta, forthcoming). Aside from some of the work noted above, there has been much less work in the area of social movements.

In what follows we discuss some of the political sociology literature on the state and make suggestions concerning their implications for state-oriented challengers, under circumstances where states have been largely democratized and have developed capacities. Our treatment addresses states not as arenas in which actors neutrally battle, nor as a set of political actors or governments that gain control over various parts of the states through election, appointment, or other means. Instead we are concerned with states as political contexts, sets of institutions and organizations and people engaged in specific lines of action, which is legitimated as being official policy among citizens and backed by a peculiarly strong combination of ceremony and force. We do not mean to suggest that states are the only important parts of political contexts facing social movements, but they are important.

They are important because states are central to social movements that seek concessions or benefits from the state or those that use the state to influence other targets – which probably includes most challengers. And so it is useful to make conceptual distinctions and theorize about the likely impact of state institutions, rules, organizations, policies, and processes on challengers. Many social movements attempt to gain collective benefits through the state, and so variations and changes in important dimensions of the states are likely to have systematic influences on important aspects of social movements. This holds

good whether one is trying to explain all manner of long-term differences in forms or amounts of social movement activity in all times across all places or whether one is devising explanations for the most historically contingent of path-dependent processes within specified polities, or something middle-range in between.

In what follows we discuss aspects of states as political contexts and relate them to outcomes of interest in the study of social movements, taking up the challenge to think through how political contexts are likely to influence challengers. We explicitly address authority in state political institutions, the democratization of state institutions, electoral rules and procedures in choosing state political personnel, state bureaucracies, and state policies. As we argue below, each of these has had impact on lines of action of concern to social movements and thus is likely to influence movements themselves. Despite increases in state capacities and the democratization of states everywhere, these contexts are likely to vary quite a bit even among well developed states in advanced capitalist countries. These aspects range from the structural to the dynamic, in terms of their susceptibility to change, and from the systemic to the local, in terms of whether they would influence all challengers and potential challengers or only specific ones.

Because these aspects of states are likely to make some forms of mobilization and lines of social movement action more productive than others, states are likely to influence the gamut of social movement outcomes, though not necessarily evenly. To the extent that these concepts have been employed in the social movement literature, they result in hypotheses that seem contrary to our expectations. Largely, the literature has focused on state contexts that are claimed to spur mobilization. But if one considers whether state contexts are likely to aid challengers in their bids for state action, most arguments would concern more specific social movement outcomes, such as challengers' forms, lines of action, and political identities.

Polity Structure: Centralization and Divided Authority

States are at the center of politics and how they are structured likely influences political activity of whatever variety, including social movement activity. Political systems are defined as the manner in which authority is organized in states. One key aspect of the states and polities generally is the degree to which authority is centralized in it. Authority can be centralized or dispersed in two main ways (Huntington, 1968; Pierson, 1994). It can be vertically dispersed throughout the polity in the manner of federalism. In such instances, state units aside from the central one have considerable power over state functions and vie

with national state authorities for control over similar functions or divide functions among the polities. Authority can be horizontally dispersed as well, with different institutions at the central state level vying for authority over different functions and responsibilities of states. These sorts of differences in state political systems are systemic in that the context influences all politics within states and thus social movements. These aspects of political systems are also among the most impervious to rapid change, as functional divisions of authority are often written into constitutions and reinforced through laws and the actions of courts.

The issue of the impact of vertically centralized authority has frequently been discussed in the literature on political opportunities. Tilly (1986, pp. 395–398) notably argues that the process of state-making throughout the last several centuries has meant that challengers have increasingly turned from local concerns and have focused on the national polity or central state. All the same, this argument does not fully address the impact on challenger activity of the substantial differences in centralization in state political institutions that have remained over the last century or so. According to most hypotheses concerning current polities, federal or decentralized polities encourage challengers' mobilization generally, because they multiply the targets for action (Meyer, 1993; Kriesi, 1995; Meyer & Staggenborg, 1996). McCarthy and Wolfson (1992) argue, though, that "conflict movements" are likely to be hindered when states lack centralization, because these movements are likely to be stymied by a variety of other state actors. In a more centralized state, local offices and agencies can be overruled, limiting their influence.

Federalism in itself does not necessarily increase the chances of winning collective benefits for challengers, and so we would not expect it to increase their mobilization overall. That said, if subnational polities have power and vary among themselves in how, and the degree to which they are susceptible to the goals of challengers, they provide a variety of incentives to mobilize in them and about them. More significantly, however, the forms of social movement activity are likely to be influenced by the level of state federalism. In more centralized polities, the mobilization of challengers is likely to be less diverse because they face limited targets of action. In contrast, collective action in federalist states is likely to be fragmented, as suggested by Kriesi (1995). Kitschelt (1986) argues that multiple points of access in federal polities lead to assimilative strategies by social movements, as they are more likely to find at least one receptive state actor. And so, whether a polity is vertically centralized or federal will have a greater impact on the forms of mobilization and action than on its overall level.

There is some suggestive evidence for this claim. Rucht (1989) analyses the environmental movements in centralized France and federalist West Germany. Although he does not specifically address the influence of centralization of authority on forms of mobilization, he finds that the French environmental movement is characterized by two internally "homogenous" and "compact" camps, while the three networks of the German movement exhibit a wider variety of forms and interconnections.

A second important aspect of the political system concerns the functional divisions of powers in the national government. Authority over different legislative, executive, judicial, and policing functions of the state may be more or less centralized or decentralized. Parliamentary political systems notably tend to combine legislative and executive functions, whereas presidential systems keep these separate. Similarly courts and judicial institutions have more or less autonomy in different political systems.

The political opportunity literature on social movements has not ignored functional or "horizontal" divisions in authority. Kitschelt (1986) and Kriesi (1995) have both posited notably that these divisions promote the mobilization of challengers. Autonomy in courts and legislatures, they argue, makes a polity generally more "open" to mobilization, as challengers can target different political institutions. The possibility for judicial veto of the legislative or executive branches of government will lead to increased social movement activity, as this opens an additional front for social movement organizations. Kriesi et al. (1995, pp. 38–39) discuss "possibilities for juridical appeal" as an important facilitator for mobilization because it provides a "direct channel of access to decision making." That said, Kitschelt argues that independent courts decrease the state's implementation capacities, lowering the prospects of making gains and thus having the likely effect of discouraging challengers (1986).

A polity with separated powers in itself does not automatically aid the mobilization of the politically disadvantaged. The standard finding in the political sociology literature runs in the opposite direction: that a political system with greatly separated powers provides various "veto" points over new state initiatives (Skocpol, 1992; Huber, Ragin & Stephens, 1993). The executive can thwart the legislature and vice versa, and both can be thwarted by the judiciary. Thus the bias in such a system is for inaction rather than action, despite the various points where contention can take place. The outcome here is not obviously encouraging for the actions of challengers.

If the goal of challengers is to prevent a new policy from being enacted, or possibly to place legal hurdles in front of actions, a political system with divided authority provides incentives for such action. Yet what typically

differentiate members of the polity from challengers are the routine workings of politics, which generally redound to the advantage of polity members, even if they are not acting. Polity members in turn typically need to take only defensive actions to retain privileges. Similarly everyday politics typically works against the claims of state-oriented challengers, who seek to establish new laws, programs, bureaucracies, and so forth to realize their claims or to gain leverage over non-state actors. In a highly fragmented system, the ease with which new initiatives can be vetoed likely works against the aspirations of challengers. In Skocpol's (1992) analysis of U.S. social policy at the turn of the 20th century, only those groups, such as veterans' and women's organizations that were able to organize successfully across the entire country had great sway over policy. Hattam's (1993) analysis of U.S. unionization in the late 19th century suggested that after unions' efforts at labor legislation were struck down repeatedly by the judiciary, they focused mainly on economic gains or business unionism.

Although radical separations of power likely dampen overall movement mobilization, then, these divisions likely encourage a wider variety of collective action – including suing through courts, proposing new legislation, attempting to influence bureaucracies concerned with the enforcement of laws. The profusion of different sites of potential collective benefits means that challengers with different strategies of action might plausibly have an impact. Specifically, we expect that the degree to which courts are autonomous, challenger action will take legal turns, and the degree to which legislatures and executive bureaus are autonomous, we would expect greater lobbying activity. Because divisions of powers make it easier for political actors to block new policy, moreover, collective actions will focus more on preventing policy than on initiating it.

There is suggestive evidence in favor of these claims about the forms of mobilization and types of action. Powers in the American national government are greatly separated and are more so than most other western democracies (Pierson, 1994, p. 32). The judiciary and legislature have autonomy, the legislature is subdivided into committees and subcommittees, each partially autonomous, and these separations of powers are multiplied throughout the federal political system (Amenta, 1998). Feminist mobilizations, which have spanned across many nations, had a variety of forms and targets in the American setting, as compared to European ones (Katzenstein, 1987). The women's movement in the United States has employed a multi-front strategy, and the abortion rights movement also has had a wide variety of forms and targets (Costain & Costain, 1987; Staggenborg, 1991, Chaps 3, 4). Collective action with many targets was characteristic of the U.S. civil rights movement

(McAdam, 1982; Burstein, 1985), perhaps the most momentous U.S. challenger of the 1950s and 1960s.

Democratization, Rules and Rights, and Electoral Procedures

For the most part the literature on political opportunity has addressed processes of democratization only in highly under-democratized polities, and in largely democratized polities this literature refers mainly to other aspects of electoral systems. However, the degree to which formally democratic institutions are bound by democratic procedures is more important to mobilization than usually appreciated, even within polities that are already largely democratized. By the extension of democratic rights we mean the lowering of legal restrictions on institutional political participation for everyday people. These rights include the ability to assemble and discuss issues. A highly democratized polity is also characterized by meaningful choices among parties or factions. An under-democratized polity is one in which political leaders are chosen by way of elections, but in which there are great restrictions on political participation, political assembly and discussion, voting, and choices among leadership groups. In the long run, the progress of political rights through the society increases social demands (Marshall, 1963). As democratic rights spread, the state becomes increasingly a target, as challengers hope to establish claims directly through it (Tarrow, 1998, Chap. 4).

The extension of democratic rights is likely to influence many different outcomes of interest to those who study social movements. It should influence the level of challenger mobilization, the types of collective action chosen by challengers, as well as influence politically important identities. When new groups are added to the electorate, the bids to gain representation of those remaining on the outside become more credible. The process of democratization also encourages the further mobilization of those who have gained rights to participate, but have not yet secured policies in their favor. Moreover, when everyday people cannot vote, political leaders and state officials have no fear of electoral reprisals from them, and so it seems plausible that movements of everyday people are more easily ignored or repressed. A second impact has to do with the type of activity in polities that are underdemocratized. A relative lack of rights to participate in formal political institutions also suggests that institutional action may be less worthwhile than non-institutional action. There are fewer reasons to work through institutional processes. Finally, because the extension of political rights is central to the outcomes of the political process, it seems likely it will have additional effects on social mobilization. The

configuration and evolution of rights will influence how groups will politically identify themselves and thus mobilize.

The United States provides an interesting case for this line of argumentation, as it has been characterized by a highly uneven historical, geographical, and group-wise pattern of democratization. Suffrage for white males effected relatively early, in the 1830s. But the enfranchisement of black men after the Civil War in the 1860s was followed by their disfranchisement in the South by the end of the century (Kousser, 1974), with significant restrictions placed on voting in many states in the North in the 20th century (Burnham, 1970), rendering the United States a democratic laggard for most of the 20th century. Despite the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965, there remain differences in obstacles to voting that serve to mute the political voices of Americans – typically poorer on average – nominally granted the suffrage (Piven & Cloward, 1989). Variation in voting is significant among rich, capitalist democracies (Hicks & Misra, 1993), due in part to laws about registration and voting periods by which citizens are able to exercise the franchise (Lijphart, 1997), and the United States ranks low. The implication is that the relatively restrictive practices of the American polity have discouraged social mobilization for most of the 20th century and that the greatest discouragement would appear in the most restrictive parts of the polity. Also, we would expect collective action in the American setting and, historically, in the more under-democratized parts of the American setting, to be weighted more toward non-institutional forms than would collective action in other settings, other things being equal. Currently we would expect U.S. social mobilization to be relatively discouraged by voting regulations and would expect challenger collective action to take non-institutional forms. What is more, group-wise mobilization would be expected to be influenced by which groups are excluded and included in the exercise of the franchise and other democratic rights.

Some historical evidence supports our contentions about the impact of democratic rules and practices on the levels of social mobilization. In the 1880s, as the Populist movement emerged, voter turnout in the South remained relatively high and opposition to the Democratic Party there could still win the vote of blacks and lower-class whites. In 1887, before many of these restrictions were in place, the Populist movement spread from Texas across the former Confederacy (Goodwyn, 1978, pp. 56–58), culminating in the 1892 electoral insurgency of the Populist Party. From 1892 to 1895 the movement's electoral mobilization proved more successful in those states where voter restriction had not yet taken hold (Kousser, 1974, p. 41). By the end of the century, as voting restrictions became solid across the South, the movement

collapsed. In cross-state studies that control for other macro-social determinants of social mobilization and for region, moreover, 1930s American challengers, such as Huey Long's Share Our Wealth and the Townsend plan were significantly influenced by the degree to which voting rights were extended (Amenta & Zylan, 1991; Amenta, Dunleavy & Bernstein, 1994).

Other evidence provides support for the claim that differences in democratization influence types of collective action. Cross-national studies using the World Values Survey have shown significant variation across national settings between "conventional" and "unconventional" action (see Halman & Nevitte, 1996; Dalton, 1988). Although unconventional political participation is not the same as non-institutional interaction within the political system, evidence concerning unconventional action seems to work in the direction we suggest. Dalton (1988, Chap. 4) finds that the "level of unconventional activity is generally highest in France and the United States," as compared to West Germany and Britain. Still, given the limitations of the survey and the fact that relevant data are unavailable, his study cannot control for other macro-social influences on the form of action.

The ways that democratic rights were distributed across groups also appears to have had an impact on the group-wise mobilization and political identities of challengers. American workers were granted the vote without having to contend for it as workers. Perhaps as a result they were less successfully politically mobilized as workers throughout the 19th century than were their European counterparts, who had to fight as a group to win the franchise (Katznelson, 1981; Shefter, 1986; Oestreicher, 1988). By contrast, partly because of their exclusion from the franchise, American women in the late 19th century and early 20th century formed political identities and organizations as women (Skocpol, 1992). The same is true for African Americans in the middle 20th century (McAdam, 1982), as they formed organizations based partly to gain the rights to vote. While the Brazilian women's movement was active in the early democratic elections and forged alliances with political parties, the Peruvian women's movement was not active in agitating for democracy, and remains distinct from both mass politics and the state. Additionally, the form these movements took during democratization process influenced the relationship between social movements and states after rights were achieved (Ray & Kortweg, 1999).

How legislative representatives are chosen and other electoral rules governing direct democracy are also likely to influence challengers, but more so regarding forms of mobilization and lines of action than overall mobilization. In electoral systems, there are basic differences between winner-take-all and proportional representation. Winner-take-all electoral systems

make it difficult for any group to form a political party or to threaten plausibly to form one (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967). Thus this type of electoral system diminishes the potential of party movements (Schwartz, 2000), challenger organizations that contest elections, an important means for challengers to gain influence in politics. And the support that new parties can provide for other forms of challenges will also be lessened in a winner-take-all electoral system. These electoral rules make it more likely that challengers – and polity members – will devise strategies to attempt to influence the existing parties and political representatives.

Winner-take-all voting systems in the America, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom seem to discourage challenger party formation. Although there were many influences on the formation of "left-libertarian" parties in the 1970s and 1980s (Kitschelt, 1988), no country with a winner-take-all electoral system was host to a significant one. The American party system was set in the 19th century with two "non-ideological" parties (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967; Burnham, 1970). Populists, Socialists, and Progressives, as well as advocates of states' rights, prohibition, and the environment among others, all have failed to gain a secure footing in the American political system despite great support at one time or another. In Gamson's (1990, pp. 277–285) historical study of American challengers through the middle of the 20th century, no new party challengers that appeared in his sample won "new advantages" and four of five suffered "collapse." All of this suggests that social mobilizations in America and places with similar electoral rules are more likely to focus on influencing political party actors than on creating parties. Along these lines, U.S. women, farmer, and labor organizations abandoned strategies to form parties at the turn of the 20th century and instead turned to lobbying activity, which proved to be more productive (Clemens, 1997).

A second important set of electoral rules concerns whether "direct democracy" devices, such as the initiative and referendum, are in existence. Such direct electoral procedures make it possible for challengers under some conditions to forgo standard institutional politics and appeal directly to the electorate. Kriesi (1995) suggests the initiative stimulates mobilization by the politically disadvantaged and of an assimilative sort. But the stimulating part seems unlikely. Because this option is not limited to the politically disadvantaged and because of high requirements of publicity to press successful initiatives and referendums, it seems likely that these rules would favor polity members. Also, the impact that direct procedures have on the focus of social mobilization is likely to go beyond inducing assimilative action to influencing action of a particular sort-activity on specific issues. Other things

being equal, single interest mobilizations will be spurred by direct techniques, because these techniques make their achievement more likely.

The initiative is available in some U.S. western states, and some evidence suggests that mobilizations around specific issues are more frequent there. In U.S. old-age politics, mobilizations for the Townsend old-age pension plan and state-level "baby" Townsend plans in the 1940s did better in these western states (Amenta, Halfmann & Young, 1999). Other issues have received national prominence by winning state-level initiatives. Moreover, the politically advantaged can also use this mechanism; California's Proposition 13 was orchestrated by real-estate interests to lower taxes (Lo, 1990). Recent mobilizations around affirmative action and the rights of immigrants have worked in the same direction. Opposing movements, too, can negate the gains of challengers by using the initiative process. In the United States in the late 1970s, several lesbian and gay rights' ordinances were repealed via initiative campaigns sponsored by counter-movement organizations (Fetner, 2001).

State Bureaucracies and Repressive Capacities

Another set of state factors, more in the middle-range and varying in terms of their systemic qualities, concern the abilities to make policies and enforce them. State bureaucracies are organizations within the executive of the state that have defined missions, as well as personnel and revenue to carry out those missions. When scholars speak of state capacities, they frequently refer to bureaucratic capabilities, as well as fiscal ones. The infrastructural power of states (Mann, 1984) is often related to their bureaucratic abilities. Although the more developed states have bureaucracies and bureaucratic capacities far in excess of those in the past, they also vary quite greatly among themselves in the amount and nature of their state bureaucratic infrastructures.

Some scholars have argued that state bureaucracies have important influences over social movements. As noted above, Tilly (1998) argues that as states have gained in capacities across the centuries, challengers have become more national. In work on more recent social movement activity across countries, Kitschelt (1986) refers to state policy bureaucracies as "implementation capacities," and suggests that they are relevant not to mobilization, but to the consequences of protest. Kriesi (1995) argues that the more professional and coherent the bureaucracy the less likely it will spur social mobilization. According to his conceptualization, states can be designated "weak" or "strong," with strong states, including professionalized bureaucracies, discouraging mobilization and weak states encouraging it. Since domestic state bureaucracies across capitalist democracies have become more coherent,

professional, and larger throughout the 20th century, these developments would constitute increasing hindrances to social mobilization. Yet it is unclear why bureaucracies without the capacity to implement policy would spur social mobilization, as they would minimize the chances of a movement achieving its goals.

If strong bureaucracies increase the chances that challengers will win substantive gains, they should spur movement mobilization. More important, because domestic bureaucracies vary in strength and form, they make some lines of future state action more likely than others with more specific consequences for challengers. Domestic bureaucracies are typically launched with missions to provide services and relieve socially and politically defined problems, and those with careers in such bureaus are typically committed to their missions. Similarly, regulatory bureaucracies are designed to enforce directives from legislatures, often with great autonomy in deciding rules. For these reasons, a state's executive bureaucracy is likely to promote challenges along the lines in which bureaucracies are already working (Nagel & Olzak, 1982, pp. 136–137; Orloff & Skocpol, 1984). Members of these bureaucracies, state actors in the standard sense, may also aid challengers whose goals dovetail with the cause of the bureau, and the greater the administrative powers of the bureau, the more support they may be able to provide (Amenta & Zylan, 1991). The environmental movement in Western Europe sought to influence policy through direct lobbying of state bureaucracies (Rucht, 1999).

Given the many possible differences in bureaucracies, any arguments about their impact on challengers are difficult to appraise outside specific areas of activity. That said, postwar European bureaucracies might have discouraged the "new" social movements examined by Kriesi (1995) because the missions of these bureaucracies did not favor the issues pressed by these movements. In U.S. states in the 1930s, where comparative analyses with control variables are possible, states with more powerful industrial commissions tended to have larger Townsend plan mobilizations (Amenta & Zylan, 1991). Walton (1992, Chap. 8) argues that sustained and successful mobilization over water rights by Owens Valley, California residents could not occur until after the 1930s when coherent state agencies began to provide the tools for efficacious political action. Women's Bureaus were an important resource during the early stages of the women's movements, providing both legitimation and a communication network for feminists in the 1960s (Duerst-Lahti, 1989).

Since Weber, states are often defined by their monopoly of legitimate violence regarding their subjects or citizens, and all states have policing organizations, ranging from local police to national investigative bureaus, that are designed to maintain internal order. In contrast to state domestic

bureaucracies, bureaucratic state capacities for the maintenance of order and possible repression are less clearly connected to social movements. Certainly the propensity to repression is at least as important as the capacity for it, perhaps more so, and bureaucracies of order often have little autonomy in making decisions about the deployment of repressive measures. It seems obvious that the vigorous use of repression on challengers would dampen overall social mobilization. Such repression would be likely to result as well in the use of disruptive tactics and the development of challengers designed to work against the state instead of through it. It has been argued that forgoing repression increases the likelihood that movements will adopt peaceful tactics (della Porta, 1996). This hypothesis might be made more concrete by arguing that the greater the autonomy of policing organizations, the more likely they are to employ repression, and thus dampen mobilization and change the forms and tactics of protesters.

There is some evidence for these speculations regarding the results of repression, though it is not clear whether repression resulted from the autonomy of the repressive bureaucracies or for other reasons. High levels of repression may be effective at preventing protest, but the impact of low-level repression is unclear (Kriesi et al., 1995). Local governments that choose to oppose the civil rights movement with legal means usually succeeded, while those that relied upon repression were more likely to fail (Barkan, 1984).

State Policies

State policies are authoritative and consistent lines of action undertaken by states, backed by laws and the legitimacy of states. Policies can often be broken up into different sorts of programs and can range from the shortest-term action, such as an official apology to highly institutionalized versions with many laws and bureaucratic structures surrounding them, such as social security or imprisonment programs. Although social movement scholars have largely ignored them, state policies can encourage, discourage, shape, or transform challengers because policies influence the flow of collective benefits to identifiable groups. In addition, by designating officially sanctioned and legitimated beneficiaries and by power of categorization, policies also help to define and redefine social groups. Although they are often the easiest to change and most focused activities of states (Gamson & Meyer, 1996), policies and programs are typically developed prior to challenges can influence their formation. Moreover, existing challengers may be encouraged inadvertently by programs – developed for other reasons – that benefit its followers. Politicians might do so to increase their electoral prospects. New programs may also aid

potential activists by freeing their time for movement work or by providing resources for movement organizations.

Along these lines, labor movements in capitalist democracies have been able to survive better recent capitalist initiatives to demobilize them where state policy supports a Ghent-type unemployment insurance system, one in which unions control unemployment funds (Western, 1993). A number of programs of Franklin Roosevelt's Second New Deal, including those in the Social Security and National Labor Relations Acts, which were created partly in response to social mobilizations, also encouraged social mobilization (Amenta & Zylan, 1991; Skocpol, 1980). The "water wars" in California between communities in Owens Valley and Los Angeles (Walton, 1992) began in earnest with the 1902 Reclamation Act, which provided for government participation in western water projects and established the Reclamation Service.

Other evidence from U.S. history suggests that policies can help to transform the struggles and focus of challengers. The unemployed workers movement of the early 1930s was a wide-ranging assortment of groups and individuals connected to various political organizations and was in decline by 1935. By the late 1930s, after the adoption of the Works Progress Authority (WPA), the movement was confined almost exclusively to WPA workers (Valocchi, 1990). In California, the Townsend plan was replaced as the main old-age organization in late 1940s by a group consisting of those receiving Old-Age Assistance (Putnam, 1970; Pinner, Jacobs & Selznick, 1959). Although no challenger demanded Aid to Dependent Children when it was created in 1935 (Cauthen & Amenta, 1996), after a generation of operation the National Welfare Rights Organization mobilized the program's recipients to struggle to liberalize it (Piven & Cloward, 1977). In Germany, the structure of state welfare policies influenced the women's movements to advocate for childcare and maternity leave programs rather than civil rights as in the United States and Britain (Ferree, 1987). Specific state policies may frame a debate such that social movement actors are forced to fight over the implementation of a specific policy. Narrowing the definition of "economic justice" to "equal employment opportunity" in the American 1960s meant that affirmative action became the main means of achieving economic civil rights (Quadagno, 1992).

In short, scholars who are concerned about the impact of political contexts on social movements would do better to think about the impact of specific state contexts on specific social movement outcomes. It seems likely that differences in these contexts will influence social movement outcomes, including their forms of organization and action. States are likely to matter even in instances where they are relatively democratized and well developed in their capacities. It is also worth thinking through the impact of these contexts on different sorts

of outcomes for challengers, beyond whether they merely aid the mobilization of challengers, as most arguments in the political opportunity structure tend to do. As we have seen, if one examines state contexts with respect to whether they would facilitate the impact of the collective action of challengers, many aspects of states have few implications for overall challenger mobilization, but major implications for their forms, lines of actions, and identities. In the next section, we discuss the potential impact of social movements on states.

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS ON STATES

Despite the fact that challengers are mainly state-oriented or have some goals or issues that involve state action, states are not typically conceptualized well in this literature as a target of social movement activity. For the most part, the literature concerns either the successes or failures of challengers, as they perceive them, or the amount of power they achieve in an abstract sense. Yet the successes and failures often refer to how they succeed or fail with respect to the state, and power is understood as gaining leverage within or through the state.

A better understanding of states is needed to develop arguments regarding the state-related consequences of social movements and to be able to assess these arguments. Because this literature is somewhat less developed than the literature on the rise, mobilization, forms, and identities of social movements, we do not discuss theoretical arguments about the impacts of social movements (for a review, see Giugni, 1999). Also, we understand that social movements have goals and consequences that do not have to do with the state. But the state is often a key target of social movements who seek to influence it directly or in order to apply pressure on other targets. And so we focus on how states can be better conceptualized as targets of state-oriented challengers. In so doing we address some of the same aspects of states we discuss above, but connect them to the issue of collective benefits for challengers.

The Limits of Success and Power

As far as the literature has gone in designating the consequences of social movements, the focus has been on their "success" in winning new advantages and access or in their achieving gains in "power." In his famous study, William Gamson (1990) posited two types of success for challengers: winning new benefits and winning some form of acceptance from the target of collective action. To ascertain what constituted new advantages, the more influential of

his two types, Gamson focused on the challenger's program. For him, this sort of success meant the degree to which a challenger's stated *program* was realized. Correspondingly, if a challenger's program or demands were not mainly realized, the challenger was considered a failure on this dimension. Paul Burstein and colleagues (1995) also make a strong case for understanding new advantages by way of a close analysis of the degree to which a challenger's program is achieved. Examining success and defining it by way of the challenger's program provides a sharp focus and draws attention to specific ends of collective action and the means devoted to attaining them.

However, the standard definition also has liabilities, especially in placing limits on the consideration of possible impacts of challenges. Most of all, it may be possible for a challenger to fail to achieve its stated program – and thus be deemed a failure – but still to win substantial collective benefits for its constituents. An alternative is to start with the concept of *collective goods* – those group-wise advantages or disadvantages from which non-participants in a challenge cannot be easily excluded (Olson, 1968; Hardin, 1982). Collective goods can be material, such as categorical social spending programs, but can also be less tangible, such as new ways to refer to members of a group. Social movement organizations almost invariably claim to represent a group extending beyond the leaders and adherents of the organization and most make demands that would provide collective benefits to that larger group. According to the collective benefit standard, a challenger can have considerable impact even when it fails to achieve what it is seeking. It is often premature or erroneous, moreover, to assume that the formal discourse and plans of social movement organizations represent the scope of the desires for change represented by a social movement (Amenta & Young, 1999b). Although the collective goods standard addresses some of the problems of the success standard, it does not provide clear guidelines for understanding collective benefits gained through the state.

Some scholars of the impact of social movements have addressed the state explicitly. They do so by addressing gains in power, an important development given that political sociology is centrally concerned with power through the state. For the most part, however, these do not go beyond the limited ideas of new benefits and access. Craig Jenkins (1982) suggests a three-part scheme based on short-term changes in political decisions, alterations in decision-making elites, and long-term changes in the distribution of goods. The first and third are different forms of new benefits, while the second is a general idea of access or acceptance. Herbert Kitschelt (1986) argues social movements can achieve substantive, procedural, and structural gains, with the first two analogous to Gamson's categories. The third type is a "transformation of

political structures," which suggests more fundamental change, but is not well specified. These formulations do well in suggesting levels and types of collective benefits and address the state and political institutions. But if one is referring to state power, the ideas need to be better connected to specific state structures and processes to make sense of the impact of challengers on the state.

State-Related Collective Benefits

Like Jenkins and Kitschelt, we employ a three-level approach, but with each level referring ultimately to collective benefits through the state. From this perspective, the greatest sort of impact is the one that provides a group, not necessarily organizations representing that group, continuing leverage over political processes. These sorts of gains increase the returns to routine collective action of a challenger. These gains are usually at a structural or systemic level of state processes. Most collective action, however, is aimed at a more medium level – benefits that will continue to flow to a group unless some countering action is taken. These generally involve major changes in policy and the bureaucratic enforcement and implementation of that policy. The most minor impact is to win a specific state decision with no long-term implications for the flows of benefits to the group. In each case, new legislation is required to secure the benefits. The difference is in the content of the legislation and what it means regarding the flow of collective benefits to groups represented by challengers. Although collective action in practice may be aimed at different levels simultaneously, these distinctions offer a basis for analyses of state-related gains.

These levels of collective benefits can be related back to the characteristics of states discussed above. Social movements may have an impact on the structure of the polity, on the degree to which authority is centralized or divided among levels of government or according to functions at the central and other levels of government. Social movements may also contest other system-wide or nearly systemic features of states, such as their democratic practices, and electoral features of political systems. At a more middle level, both in terms of the likely stability of the change and its effects across groups are changes in state bureaucracies. Finally, there are state policies. These can range quite dramatically, however, from those that are short-term and apply to few people and at one point in time to others which may apply to large numbers of people and groups and backed with legislation and bureaucratic authority. The levels of influence do not line up neatly with the most structural and systemic aspects of the state, but there is a rough correspondence.

At the highest level, a challenger may gain structural reforms of the state that give the represented group increased influence over political processes. These gains are a kind of meta-collective benefit, as they increase the productivity of all collective action. Only rarely do challengers contest the structure of authority in polities, which have become increasingly centralized over time, though with large differences remaining among them. In some ethnic mobilizations, however, it is useful for ethnic and linguistic groups that are territorially concentrated to demand devolution of authority.

By contrast gains in democratization of state processes are among the most important that can be won through social movements and have the greatest systemic effects. Winning the right to vote or the protection of that right for low-income or other disfranchised groups increases the productivity of future collective action by such groups. The winning of such rights would increase the likelihood of gaining future pecuniary and other collective benefits through state action. Needless to say many of the most important social movements and challengers have sought this basic goal, including movements of workers and women. In the United States, the civil rights movement made the enforcement of the right to participate in electoral politics an important goal.

It seems less likely that struggles over other aspects of electoral processes would increase the leverage of groups in the way that the devolution of authority can aid territorial minorities or that democratization can aid disfranchised and under-represented groups. For instance, challengers seeking to gain direct democratic devices, such as the initiative, referendum, and recall, would not automatically provide groups a greater likelihood of achieving collective benefits through the state. Whatever gains that might be made along these lines would likely be situational. In the U.S. case, these reforms were designed to break the power of the major political parties over political processes and their control over the development of state bureaucracies and policies. American parties were hierarchically organized and more oriented toward patronage and economic advantages than to issues, which were kept off political agendas (Mayhew, 1986). The results of these mobilizations were uneven, with some western states and scattered municipalities gaining reforms (Shefter, 1973; Finegold, 1995; Clemens, 1997). The advantages of such mobilizations for groups would seem to come only where patronage-oriented parties had a stranglehold over politics; mobilizations over electoral processes otherwise would not seem likely to provide political leverage for politically uninfluential groups.

At the middle level are institutionalized benefits that provide collective goods in a routine fashion to all those meeting specified requirements. Once enacted and enforced with bureaucratic means, categorical social spending

programs, notably, provide benefits in such a manner (Amenta, 1998). The beneficiaries gain rights of entitlement to the benefits, and legal changes and bureaucratic reinforcement of such laws help to ensure the routine maintenance of such collective benefits. Under these circumstances, the issue is privileged in politics and the political system becomes biased in favor of the group. The issue is effectively removed from the political agenda in favor of the group. For the situation to change it is incumbent on some other person or group to challenge the institutionalized benefits. A bureaucracy would have to be targeted and captured, or new legislation would have to be passed rescinding benefits. Yet taking away benefits from defined groups becomes more difficult over time, especially as bureaucracies are created and reinforced and people in other ways organize their lives around the existence of the programs (Pierson, 1994). Regulatory bureaucracies that are products of challenger mobilizations may push on their own to advance mandates in the absence of new legislation, as in the case of affirmative action (Bonastia, 2000).

Alternatively, collective action may be intended to win or may result in winning higher-order rights through the state that advantage a group in its conflicts with other groups (Skocpol, 1985). The state may be used as a "fulcrum" in this sense (Tarrow, 1998) by groups not mainly state-oriented. The general way to differentiate this sort of benefit from the other types is that it increases the probability of the impact of collective action by a group with regard to its targets outside the state. Labor movements, notably, often focus on the state to ensure rights to organize and engage in collective bargaining with businesses and business associations.

Struggles over the rights of labor to bargain collectively were at the center of conflicts by U.S. worker organizations in the 1930s and 1940s, and they ended with very uneven results as gains made in the 1930s through the Wagner Act were partly undone in the 1940s by the Taft-Hartley Act (Plotke, 1996). Equal employment opportunity laws provided advantages for the civil rights movements in fighting discrimination by private corporations (Burstein, 1991). By outlawing a set of practices and providing a legal remedy for a class of employees, they created another channel for protest, and by creating a bureaucracy that has influenced the outcomes of these legal cases, they have provided additional resources and legitimation for the movement.

It should be noted that through their policies states can ratify or attempt to undermine potential collective identities or help to create ones. To be valuable a new identity should aid in elevating and defining group members, in relation to other members of the group and those outside, and the identity must receive a kind of societal endorsement or recognition. Insofar as a challenger constructs a new collective identity that extends to a beneficiary group and

provides psychological rewards such as pride, winning affirmations of this identity is a potentially important accomplishment (for a review, see Polletta & Jasper, 2001).

Although the state does not hold a monopoly on recognizing new identity claims, states do provide many influential communications, some of them authoritative. Politicians and state actors are often in the vanguard of recognizing new identity claims and often recognize these claims by way of changes in policy (Amenta & Young, 1999b). A challenger may gain results ranging from greater respect through official governmental representations to having the group represented by the challenger recognized in state policies. The state's role in defining racial categories, for instance, has been at times the target of social movements. For example, in the United States, activists attempting to legitimate a multiracial identity were successful in having the census bureau accept more than one answer on racial questions in the 2000 census. Similarly, black activists in Brazil fought successfully for the inclusion of racial questions, rather than questions based on color, in the 1991 census in the hopes of achieving greater recognition of the special status of black Brazilians (Nobles, 2000). However accomplished, gains in collective identity may influence attempts to gain collective benefits taking other forms, such as pecuniary rewards or legal rights, or may reinforce existing ones.

At a lower level, challengers may win something specific and minor for their constituency group without implications for identities, such as a short-run or one-time pecuniary benefit. The attempt of American veterans' organizations to win the early payment of their World War I "bonuses" in 1936 (instead of 1945) constitutes a case in point. These bonuses went to all who qualified for them, but had no implications for these veterans in the future or for the veterans of future wars (Daniels, 1971). The one-shot brand of benefit, however, has often been criticized as insubstantial (Lipsky, 1968). Piven and Cloward (1977) argue along these lines that the first response of political leaders to unruly protests will be to "remedy some of the immediate grievances." These programs may be designed mainly to assure a broader public audience that something has been done about a problem. Such benefits imply a limited conception of rights for the categories of citizens to which the benefits pertain.

Methodological Benefits to Thinking about Collective Benefits through the State

Analyzing the consequences of social movements often provide a series of methodological problems that can hinder empirical appraisals of theoretical claims. To determine why a movement had consequences means determining

first whether it had any consequences and which ones – not at all an easy task. Often more than one set of actors is pressing in the same direction as a social movement, and sometimes similar actions by a social movement at different times and places result in different effects. This problem is aggravated by the fact that scholars typically study individual movements or organizations. In such a situation competing arguments may seem equally plausible. No one has followed Gamson in examining a random sample of movements. For all these reasons, it is difficult to devise compelling analytical strategies to appraise arguments about the consequences of social movements.

Analyses of the political process in the development of legislation, for example, can help to overcome these problems, particularly in ascertaining whether a challenger had an impact or not. To make a convincing claim, any historical analysis would need to demonstrate that the challenger achieved one or more of the following: changed the plans and agendas of political leaders; had an impact on the content of the proposals as devised by executives, legislators, or administrators; or influenced disinterested representatives key to the passage of proposed legislation. Making such a case would require understanding political leaders' agendas and the content of legislative programs prior to the challenge as well as assessing how legislators might have voted in its absence. New legislation must also be implemented, and movements can influence the speed and nature of this process as well.

Dividing the process of creating new laws containing collective benefits into the agenda setting, legislative content, passage, and implementation of legislation simplifies analysis and makes it easier to judge the impact of challengers. If a challenger, for instance, inserts its issue onto the political agenda, it can be seen as having increased its probability of winning some collective benefits for its larger constituency. The value of the benefits would be unknown, however, until legislative alternatives had been developed. As far as legislative content is concerned, a challenger can work to increase the value of collective benefits included in any bill that makes it onto the agenda. Although it is difficult to gauge exactly the amount and type of collective benefit in a bill's content, it can be done in a rough way. Once the content has been specified, moreover, challengers can influence individual legislators to vote for the bill and thus influence the probability of gaining specified collective benefits. From there the program must be implemented, and the more secure the implementation the greater the probability of collective benefits over the long run. To put it another way, if a challenger has an impact on any one of these processes, it would increase the expected value of collective benefits for the beneficiary group.

Unless all three processes are negotiated successfully – placing the issue on the agenda, writing a bill with collective benefits, *and* passing the bill – no collective benefits will result. Influence in implementation depends on successfully negotiating these other steps. It seems that it will be only very rarely that a challenger can influence all of these processes. That said, for a challenger to influence the placement of an issue on the agenda, to increase the collective benefits in legislation, to affect the probabilities that elected officials might support such legislation, or to reinforce the implementation of legislation – each of these is a kind of beneficial impact in itself. In short, state legislative processes can be broken down in ways that are useful for examining challengers in action and for addressing some of the methodological difficulties of ascertaining the impact of movements on states.

CONCLUSION

Although the idea of political opportunities is appealing and has led to some important gains in understanding social movements, political opportunity is often too vague in its conceptualization and in the theoretical claims made for it. One important step toward clarity would be for scholars of social movements to employ in their analyses understandings of states current in political sociology. After all, social movements are often defined by their attempts to influence states and state processes. And much writing and research in political sociology and political science addresses the importance of states in influencing political participation and group formation. As we have seen, it seems worth thinking through the likely impact on social movements of different aspects of states, such as structures of authority, processes of democratization, electoral rules, bureaucratic forms, and policies. This exercise has helped in providing specific theoretical connections between cause and outcome that are often lacking in political opportunity formulations.

It seems likely that the ways that states are structured channel social movements in certain important and systematic ways. But we do not mean to suggest that social movement analysts should be static and focus on the broadest and most systemic influences of states on movements. As we have seen, state factors range from relatively structural and systemic aspects of polities to relatively short-term changes in policies and actions. What is more, overarching contexts are often employed in historical analyses to place scope conditions over theoretical arguments that may be conjunctural or configurational in character (Ragin, 1987). That is to say, one might argue that specific causes will likely work only under certain sorts of overarching contextual conditions, such as a democratized political system or a programmatic political party system or with a favorable state bureaucratic authority. Similarly, theoretical arguments in historical and comparative analysis are often made by way of multiple causation. Long-term factors such as systemic properties of states can be combined with more short-term factors such as changes in policy and the application of social movement strategies to help explain social movements outcomes, such as their potential impacts on collective benefits (Amenta, 1998). In short, paying greater attention to aspects of states will aid in developing appraisable propositions of whatever sort: whether one is proposing explanations of large-scale processes of change in characteristics of movements, to the most contingent sequences of events in the rise of movements, to more middle-range theories working largely at the meso level of analysis.

Understanding states in the ways we suggest may also lead to more plausible and usable heuristic models of collective action. In Tilly's (1978) influential three-member polity model, for instance, there are members of the polity and challengers, who contend for power and engage in collective action. A member has routine access to the resources of the government, the third player, whereas challengers do not. In this model the government is the organization that controls the principle means of coercion-an organization nowadays mainly conceptualized as the state. Using a more variegated conception of the state, however, might improve heuristic modeling. For instance, one might bring into the model state bureaucratic actors as contending with members of the polity and challengers. One might also see polities as being not neutral arenas, but slanted toward the making of new claims or against them, as is the case in which authority in the polity is greatly divided, or against some forms of actors or claims and in favor of others.

Although we have focused on states and social movements, the idea of political opportunity needs to be unpacked further by political sociologists. The next moves would be to make better sense of political parties and interest groups. It would be worth treating them in their own right, rather than seeing them as part of a larger structure or as part of an undifferentiated group of "elites," as political opportunity structure theorists sometimes have it. These institutional aspects of political life vary greatly across places and times and have been studied by political sociologists with respect to their influence on state policies. They could also be employed to construct theories of different social movement outcomes, including the consequences of social movements.

Finally, it is important to understand the impact of social movements on states. Although social movement activity is often aimed at states, the way that scholars of social movements tend to conceptualize the potential consequences of this collective action has not been connected to conceptualizations of states,

and instead has focused on success defined movement by movement or on overly broad understandings of power. Making sense of the different possible impacts of movements on states, as we have done above, will make it easier to construct theoretical arguments and help to address some of the methodological difficulties that have constrained research in this growing area of study.

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