

Cambridge University Press  
0521805880 - Dynamics of Contention  
Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## *Dynamics of Contention*

Dissatisfied with the compartmentalization of studies concerning strikes, wars, revolutions, social movements, and other forms of political struggle, McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly identify causal mechanisms and processes that recur across a wide range of contentious politics. Critical of the static, single-actor models (including their own) that have prevailed in the field, they shift the focus of analysis to dynamic interaction. Doubtful that large, complex series of events such as revolutions and social movements conform to general laws, they break events into smaller episodes, then identify recurrent mechanisms and processes within them. *Dynamics of Contention* examines and compares eighteen contentious episodes drawn from many different parts of the world since the French Revolution, probing them for consequential and widely applicable mechanisms, for example, brokerage, category formation, and elite defection. The episodes range from nineteenth-century nationalist movements to contemporary Muslim–Hindu conflict to the Tiananmen crisis of 1989 to disintegration of the Soviet Union. The authors spell out the implications of their approach for explanation of revolutions, nationalism, and democratization, then lay out a more general program for study of contentious episodes wherever and whenever they occur.

Doug McAdam is Professor of Sociology at Stanford University and Director Designate of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. His previous books include *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970* (1982, 1999) and *Freedom Summer* (1988), which shared the 1990 C. Wright Mills Award and for which he received a Guggenheim Fellowship to support research.

Sidney Tarrow received his Ph.D. at the University of California at Berkeley in 1965, where he studied comparative politics and did the research for his first book, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy* (1967). He taught at Yale and Cornell before becoming Maxwell Upson Professor of Government (and then also of Sociology) at Cornell. He specializes in European politics and social movements and recently (with Doug Imig) has completed a collective volume entitled *Contentious Europeans*.

Charles Tilly (Ph.D. in Social Relations, Harvard, 1958) is Joseph L. Buntz Professor of Social Science at Columbia University. His recent books include *European Revolutions* (1993), *Popular Contention in Great Britain* (1995), and *Durable Inequality* (1998), for which he received the 2000 Distinguished Scholarly Publication Award from the American Sociological Association.

Cambridge University Press  
0521805880 - Dynamics of Contention  
Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

*Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics*

*Editors*

Doug McAdam *Stanford University and Center for Advanced  
Study in the Behavioral Sciences*  
Sidney Tarrow *Cornell University*  
Charles Tilly *Columbia University*

Ronald Aminzade et al., *Silence and Voice in the Study of  
Contentious Politics*  
Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly,  
*Dynamics of Contention*

Cambridge University Press  
0521805880 - Dynamics of Contention  
Doug Mcadam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

# *Dynamics of Contention*

---

**DOUG MCADAM**

*Stanford University*

**SIDNEY TARROW**

*Cornell University*

**CHARLES TILLY**

*Columbia University*



**CAMBRIDGE**  
**UNIVERSITY PRESS**

Cambridge University Press  
 0521805880 - Dynamics of Contention  
 Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
 The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK  
 40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA  
 10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, VIC 3166, Australia  
 Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain  
 Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa  
<http://www.cambridge.org>

© Cambridge University Press 2001

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception  
 and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,  
 no reproduction of any part may take place without  
 the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2001

Printed in the United States of America

*Typeface* Janson Text Roman 10/13 pt. *System* QuarkXPress [BTS]

*A catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.*

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data*  
 McAdam, Doug.

Dynamics of contention / Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, Charles Tilly.  
 p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-521-80588-0 – ISBN 0-521-01187-6 (pb.)

1. Collective behavior. 2. Social movements. 3. Revolutions.  
 4. Democratization. I. Tarrow, Sidney G. II. Tilly, Charles. III. Title.  
 HM866 .M23 2001

303.48'4 – dc21

2001016172

ISBN 0 521 80588 0 hardback  
 ISBN 0 521 01187 6 paperback

Cambridge University Press  
0521805880 - Dynamics of Contention  
Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

*To the CASBS staff,  
for their unique combination of wisdom,  
tolerance, and effectiveness.*

## *Contents*

<i>List of Figures and Tables</i>	<i>page</i> xi
<i>Preface and Acknowledgments</i>	xiii
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xix
 <b><i>Part I: What's the Problem?</i></b>	
1. WHAT ARE THEY SHOUTING ABOUT?	3
2. LINEAMENTS OF CONTENTION	38
3. COMPARISONS, MECHANISMS, AND EPISODES	72
 <b><i>Part II: Tentative Solutions</i></b>	
4. MOBILIZATION IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE	91
5. CONTENTIOUS ACTION	124
6. TRANSFORMATIONS OF CONTENTION	160
 <b><i>Part III: Applications and Conclusions</i></b>	
7. REVOLUTIONARY TRAJECTORIES	193
8. NATIONALISM, NATIONAL DISINTEGRATION, AND CONTENTION	227
9. CONTENTIOUS DEMOCRATIZATION	264
10. CONCLUSIONS	305
<i>References</i>	349
<i>Index</i>	371
	ix

## *List of Figures and Tables*

Fig. 1.1	The Simple Polity Model	<i>page</i> 11
Fig. 1.2	The Classic Social Movement Agenda for Explaining Contentious Politics	17
Fig. 2.1	A Dynamic, Interactive Framework for Analyzing Mobilization in Contentious Politics	45
Table 3.1	Distribution of Episodes by Geography and Conventionally Assigned Forms of Contention	76
Fig. 3.1	Location of Our Episodes in Regime Space	80
Fig. 5.1	Loci of Contentious Identities	136
Fig. 5.2	The Interaction–Outcome Screen	140
Fig. 9.1	Effective Democratization	267
Fig. 9.2	Strong-State versus Weak-State Paths to Democracy	270
Fig. 9.3	Mexican and Swiss Paths Toward Democracy, 1750–1990	273
Table 9.1	Sample Mechanisms and Processes Promoting Democratization	275
Table 10.1	Three Robust Processes and Six Illustrative Cases	315
Fig. 10.1	Actor Constitution through Contentious Interaction	317
Fig. 10.2	Polarization	323
Fig. 10.3	Scale Shift	333

## *Preface and Acknowledgments*

Our enterprise began with a failed coup. In 1995, friends, students, and collaborators of Chuck Tilly organized a gathering in Amsterdam that was supposed to ease Tilly into retirement. He failed to get the message. As second best, McAdam and Tarrow decided to divert Tilly temporarily from his other projects into one that would minimize the evils he might otherwise inflict on the world. This book is the result.

Uncertain of their ability to coerce Tilly into compliance with their schemes, the two conspirators plotted to expand their cabal. Wouldn't it be great, they mused, if scholars from the related fields of social movements, revolutions, nationalism, and democratization could find a venue in which to explore the possibilities for synthesis across these nominally distinct subfields? That conversation led to a proposal to the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences for a one-year Special Project to be devoted to the kind of exploration and synthesis they had in mind. After enlisting Tilly as co-conspirator, a proposal was drafted, ably vetted by Phil Converse and Bob Scott (then Director and Associate Director of the Center), and approved by both the Center's Advisory Committee on Special Projects and its Board of Trustees. The plot had thickened!

Once the Special Project began, our broader enterprise took a fateful turn. Realizing faster than we did how excessive were our aims, Bob Scott encouraged us to seek support that would allow us to stretch the project over a longer time frame. At his suggestion, we made application in 1995 to the Mellon Foundation's Sawyer Seminar Series, seeking support for a three-year seminar series organized around the broad topic of Contentious Politics. To our delight and surprise, Mellon granted our request. Our thanks go to Harriet Zuckerman for the vision – and the patience – to have encouraged this unusual variation on the Sawyer Seminar format and to



Cambridge University Press  
0521805880 - Dynamics of Contention  
Doug Mcadam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## Preface and Acknowledgments

Neil Smelser (Phil's successor as Center Director) and Bob for agreeing to host it at the Center. We also thank the Center staff for their patience and good humor as they faced the onslaughts of the "contentious crowd" over the years of our association.

But we now faced a new challenge: finding the right core faculty around whom to build that conversation. We were fortunate to attract four colleagues who joined us in founding what came to be called the "Invisible College of Contentious Politics". With Ron Aminzade, Jack Goldstone, Liz Perry, and Bill Sewell, we worked as a team for three years to fashion a more interactive approach to contentious politics. One fruit of that effort appears in a companion volume to this one, *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics*. Others, we hope, will soon join the first two volumes. Our own book profited tremendously from interaction with these friends and colleagues and we thank them warmly.

Our debts go beyond the core faculty of the Contentious Politics group. Though neither the Center nor our Mellon sponsors required us to do so, the seven of us agreed immediately to involve graduate students – and not just our own – in the project. Who better to offer fresh perspectives on important topics than promising young scholars not wedded to disciplinary boundaries or subfield conventions? To the five voices of that first graduate cohort in 1996–1997 – Lissa Bell, Pamela Burke, Robyn Eckhardt, John Glenn, and Joseph Luders – were added nine others over the next two years: Jorge Cadena-Roa, David Cunningham, Manali Desai, Debbie Gould, Hyojoung Kim, Heidi Swarts, Nella Van Dyke, Heather Williams, and Kim Williams. They not only helped to enrich the larger project but also made more contributions to *Dynamics of Contention* than they can know. We thank them warmly and hope that their association with us was as rewarding for them as it has been to us.

Still others helped. In each of the Mellon project's three years the seven core faculty members and their junior associates organized three small conferences, each focused on a specific topic relevant to a general understanding of contention. Among the topics explored were religion and contention, emotion and contention, the globalization of contention, identity and networks in contention. Each of these conferences featured participation by two or three invited experts. We owe thanks to Mark Beissinger, Craig Calhoun, Bill Gamson, Jeff Goodwin, Roger Gould, Susan Harding, Michael Hechter, Lynn Hunt, Jane Jenson, Arthur Kleinman, Hanspeter Kriesi, Marc Lichbach, John Meyer, Ann Mische, Aldon Morris, Maryjane Osa, Gay Seidman, Kathryn Sikkink, Verta

Cambridge University Press  
0521805880 - Dynamics of Contention  
Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## Preface and Acknowledgments

Taylor, Mark Traugott, Paul Wapner, and Tim Wickham-Crowley for their collaboration.

Our debts go even further. During year three of the project, while we were in residence at the Center, our colleague Ron Aminzade joined us in organizing a general seminar on the topic of contentious politics for interested Center Fellows. We were lucky to enjoy the participation in this seminar of an unusually large and talented group of our fellow Fellows. These included: Jerry Davis, Jane Mansbridge, Rob Sampson, Carol Swain, Ed Tiryakian, and Katherine Verdery. We thank them for their willingness to take part in our sometimes contentious conversations.

Away from the Center, we had to defend what we had learned to the many experts who helped us on our paths to some knowledge of their areas. They will have to judge whether we have expanded their knowledge as well as our own. We received precious advice, criticism, information, and technical assistance from Paloma Aguilar Fernández, Benedict Anderson, Ron Aminzade, Ramón Adell Argilés, Mark Beissinger, Richard Bense, Valerie Bunce, Jorge Cadena-Roa, Lars-Erik Cederman, Ruth Collier, Maria Cook, Donatella della Porta, Rita di Leo, Rafael Durán Muñoz, Neil Fligstein, Jonathan Fox, Carmenza Gallo, Miriam Golden, Jack Goldstone, Roger Gould, Davydd Greenwood, Ernst Haas, Judy Hellman, Steven Kaplan, Peter Katzenstein, Mark Kesselman, Bert Klendermans, Gerry van Klinken, Ruud Koopmans, Hanspeter Kriesi, Hyeok Kwon, David Laitin, Peter Lange, Vina Lanzona, Marc Lerner, Mark Lichbach, James Mahoney, David S. Meyer, Jose Ramón Montero, Reynaldo Yunuen Ortega Ortiz, Elizabeth Perry, Hayagreeva Rao, William Roy, Hector Schamis, Cathy Schneider, Jane Schneider, Peter Schneider, William H. Sewell Jr., Vivienne Shue, Jack Snyder, Bö Strath, Yang Su, Andrew Walder, Elisabeth Wood, Barry Weingast, Thomas Weskopp, Viviana Zelizer, and members of the Columbia University Workshop on Contentious Politics.

As our project drew to a close, the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences offered still another opportunity to refine our work. A Summer Institute with twenty lively young scholars pitted their own intellectual steeds against our manuscript in the summer of 2000, with McAdam and Tilly in the saddle and Tarrow briefly running alongside. Enthusiastic thanks to Kenneth Andrews, Joe Bandy, Neal Carter, David Cunningham, Christian Davenport, Bob Edwards, Gautam Ghosh, John Guidry, Frederick Harris, Peter Houtzager, Jason Kaufman, Deborah

Cambridge University Press  
0521805880 - Dynamics of Contention  
Doug Mcadam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## Preface and Acknowledgments

Martin, Byron Miller, S. Mara Pérez-Godoy, Kurt Schock, Paul Silverstein, Jackie Smith, David Stone, and Deborah Yashar for thoughtful, probing comments on our book.

All books are learning experiences as well as attempts to communicate knowledge to others. Writing this one – perhaps more than most – was an intense learning experience. This was the case for three reasons. First, our program called for analysis of many episodes that lay outside our previous areas of geographical and historical expertise. Second, the program demanded constant learning in the course of assembling our materials. For if – as we will maintain in what follows – the same processes and mechanisms of contention recur across wide bands of territory and different forms of contention, what we learned from one episode could not be neatly partitioned off from the others. Each foray into new territory caused a return to familiar terrain for new interrogation of once-comfortable understandings. Third, because no single one of us possessed sufficient authority to exercise a veto power over the others (“Just let him try!”), discussions over content and interpretation were vigorous – often contentious. Our working sessions proceeded like rotating seminars, with roles of teacher, student, and kibbitzer revolving dizzily around the table.

Where does the resulting book fit into the rapidly expanding field of contentious politics and into social science as a whole? Like other scholars and teachers, in our book we work through incessant dialogue with previous ideas and findings, including our own. Hardly a paragraph has taken shape without reflection or debate on the relation between what the paragraph says and earlier work: This confirms X, that contradicts Y, Z made the same point somewhat differently, and so on. The book’s first two chapters identify scholarly literatures on which we have drawn extensively, but they do not pinpoint the book’s location with respect to other writings. Earlier versions included much more painstaking specifications of origins for particular ideas, disagreements with competing accounts, and identifications of work that paralleled our own. Spurred by complaints from readers of those earlier drafts, we recognized that such references to relevant work were obscuring our arguments while producing a lengthy, ponderous tome.

In rewriting, we eliminated almost all detailed discussions of previous work. In general, we restricted explicit mentions of other authors to distinctive ideas and findings on which our arguments directly depend. Specialists in the various fields the book traverses may sometimes feel that we

Cambridge University Press  
0521805880 - Dynamics of Contention  
Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## Preface and Acknowledgments

have given insufficient credit to relevant work by others or insufficient attention to contrary views. On balance, nevertheless, we think that most readers will gain from considering our analyses without being distracted by ostentatious finger-pointing toward adjacent literatures.

We hope that the resulting sparseness of references to other people's analyses will not suggest disdain for the ideas and efforts of our respected colleagues. We have not hesitated to relate our arguments to other work on contentious politics in separate publications, both joint and individual (see e.g., McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 1997; McAdam 1999; Tarrow 1998; Tilly 2001). It will soon become clear, in any case, how much this book depends on dialogue and respectful engagement with recent investigations of contentious politics.

Students of contentious politics may want to decide where we stand on current controversies among structuralists, culturalists, and rationalists. If they look for evidence of the kind of paradigm warfare that often rages across the pages of learned journals, they will be disappointed. If our frankly syncretic view has a label, it would have to be "relational." While acknowledging the crucial contributions of rationalists, culturalists, and structuralists, we think the area of contentious politics will profit most from systematic attention to interaction among actors, institutions, and streams of contentious politics. Our program starts from this perspective to explore a variety of areas of contention using the comparative analysis of mechanisms and processes to do so.

How should students of contentious politics who find the book's program attractive proceed? Plenty of previous analyses actually identify robust causal mechanisms and use them to explain salient features of contentious episodes. Such analyses should continue to provide practical models for future work. Many of the questions, and some of the answers, posed by analysts in what we distinguish roughly as structuralist, culturalist, and rationalist approaches remain important guides for the next round of inquiry. Instead of burning their manuals and junking their toolboxes, we hope that skilled users of existing intellectual tools will invent new ways of wielding them. We hope they will attempt seriously to refute, challenge, modify, extend – now and then, even verify – our book's arguments.

Ithaca, New York  
September 23, 2000

## *Abbreviations*

ANC	African National Congress
BANAMERICA	Bank of America ( <i>Banco de América</i> )
BANDILA	The Nation United in Spirit and Mission ( <i>Bayan Nakiisa so Diwa at Layunin</i> )
BANIC	Nicaraguan Bank ( <i>Banco Nicaragüense</i> )
BAYAN	The New Nationalist Alliance ( <i>Bagong Alyansa Makabayan</i> )
BC	Black Consciousness
BCCs	Basic Christian Communities
BISIG	The Federation for the Advancement of Socialist Thought and Praxis ( <i>Bukluraan para sa Ikauunlad ng Sosyalistang Isip at Gawa</i> )
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
CBCP	Catholic Bishop's Conference of the Philippines
CC.OO	Workers' Commissions ( <i>Comisiones Obreras</i> )
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CCTV	Chinese Central Television
CEOE	Confederation of Spanish Employers' Organizations ( <i>Confederación Español de Organizaciones Empresariales</i> )
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
COSIP	(Later COSEP) Higher Council of Private Enterprise ( <i>Consejo Superior de Iniciativa Privada</i> )
CORE	Congress of Racial Equality
CPP	Communist Party of the Philippines
CSCE	Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
EATUC	East Africa Trades Union Congress

## Abbreviations

ETA	Basque Homeland and Freedom ( <i>Euzkadi Ta Azkatasuna</i> )
FAT	Autonomous Workers' Federation ( <i>Federación Autónoma de Trabajo</i> )
FRAP	Anti-fascist Revolutionary Patriotic Front ( <i>Frente Revolucionario Antifascista Patriótico</i> )
FSLN	Sandinista National Liberation Front ( <i>Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional</i> )
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INDE	Nicaraguan Development Institute ( <i>Instituto Nicaraguense de Desarrollo</i> )
INMECAFÉ	Mexican Coffee Institute ( <i>Instituto Mexicano de Café</i> )
JAJA	Justice for Aquino, Justice for All
JOC	Young Catholic Workers ( <i>Juventudes Obreras Católicas</i> )
KASAMA	The Federation of People's Organizations ( <i>Kalipunan ng mga Samaban ng Mamamayan</i> )
KAU	Kenyan African Union
KCA	Kikuyu Central Association
MIA	Montgomery Improvement Association
MIL	Iberian Liberation Movement ( <i>Movimiento Ibérico de Liberación</i> )
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NAMFREL	National Movement for Free Elections
NPA	New People's Army
OAS	Organization of American States
PAN	National Action Party ( <i>Partido de Acción Nacional</i> )
PBSP	Philippine Business for Social Progress
PCE	Spanish Communist Party ( <i>Partido Comunista Español</i> )
PCI	Italian Communist Party ( <i>Partito Comunista Italiano</i> )
PKI	Indonesian Communist Party ( <i>Partai Komunis Indonesia</i> )
PLN	National Liberation Party ( <i>Partido de Liberación Nacional</i> )
PRC	People's Republic of China
PRI	Institutional Revolutionary Party ( <i>Partido Revolucionario Institucional</i> )

Cambridge University Press  
 0521805880 - Dynamics of Contention  
 Doug Mcadam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

### Abbreviations

PRD	Party of the Democratic Revolution ( <i>Partido de la Revolución Democrática</i> )
PRONASOL	National Solidarity Program ( <i>Programa Nacional de Solidaridad</i> )
PSOE	Spanish Socialist Workers' Party ( <i>Partido Socialista Obrero Español</i> )
SCLC	Southern Christian Leadership Conference
SNCC	Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee
UCD	Union of the Democratic Center ( <i>Unión de Centro Democrático</i> )
UDEL	Union of Democratic Liberation ( <i>Unión Democrática de Liberación</i> )
UDF	United Democratic Front
UGT	General Workers' Union ( <i>Unión General de Trabajadores</i> )
UMALUN	Alliance of the Urban Poor ( <i>Ugnayan ng mg Maralita taga Lunsod</i> )
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VHP	World Hindu Council ( <i>Visbwa Hindu Parishad</i> )