

Sidney Tarrow, "A Movement Society?"

What does Tarrow say has changed between 1789 and 1989 when it comes to the momentum and form of social movements? What does he mean when he says that we may have entered "a movement society"? How has this possibility come about?

The Theory of Collective Action

- "economist Mancur Olson's theory that "large groups" mobilize members through selective incentives and constraints", but "multipolar actors in sustained conflict with opponents have few incentives or constraints to deploy. Unlike voluntary associations, *movements are not organizations*, and those who try to lead them have little or no control over those they hope will follow them."
- "The main incentives for movement creation and diffusion are found in the structure of political opportunities. Increasing access to power, realignments in the political system, conflicts among elites and the availability of allies give early challengers the incentives to assault the power structure and create opportunities for others."
- "Sustaining a movement is the result of a delicate balance between suffocating the power in movement by providing too much organization and leaving it to splin off uselessly away through the tyranny of decentralization."

What is the following quote saying? "Since the power in movement depends on the mobilization of external opportunities, when opportunities expand from challengers to other groups and shift to elites and authorities, movements lose their primary source of power...it disperses rapidly and passes inexorably into more institutional forms of politics."

1789/1989: themes of "identity, autonomy and injustice", and the creation of the central state as the formation of a "fulcrum" that brought "broad coalitions of challengers together in sustained interactions with national states"

'The major watersheds' in the "cycles of protest" since 1789? (358)

- Where does the movement 'break down' in the 1989 case? "like 1848...the mood shifted from liberalism and representative government to ethnic particularism and national assertiveness."
- "If these changes are substantial and cumulative, then the world may be moving from a logic of alternation between periods of movement and periods of quiescence into a permanent movement society"
- The rise of transnational movements and the increasing rate of diffusion: the New Left of the 1960s; the peace movement of the 1980s; global environmental movements; militant Islam

Tarrow asserts that "if movements are becoming transnational, they may be freeing themselves of state structures and thence of the constraining influence of state-mediated contention." He cites three factors: 1) that "the interdependent global economy may be producing transnational collective action", 2) an increasing economic North-South disparity correspondent to an increasing technological proximity, and 3) a continued stream of migration has created what Benedict Anderson calls "long-distance nationalism".

As a result, the state "is becoming increasingly permeable to nonterritorial movements"