Why and How History Matters

chapter for
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Do you suppose that historians labor dumbly in deep trenches, digging up facts so that political scientists can order and explain them? Do you imagine that political scientists, those skilled intellectual surgeons, slice through the fat of history to get at the sinews of rational choice or political economy? Do you claim that political scientists can avoid peering into the mists of history by clear-eyed examination of the contemporary world that lies within their view? On the contrary: this chapter gives reasons for thinking that explanatory political science can hardly get anywhere without relying on careful historical analysis.

Let us begin, appropriately, with a historical experience. Early in 1969, Stanford political scientist Gabriel Almond proposed that the (U.S.) Social Science Research Council use Ford Foundation funds to support a study of state formation in Western Europe. Thus began an adventure. For fifteen years before then, the SSRC's Committee on Comparative Politics had been looking at what it called "political development in the new states." By then, committee members Almond, Leonard Binder, Philip Converse, Samuel Huntington, Joseph LaPalombara, Lucian Pye, Sidney Verba, Robert Ward, Myron Weiner, and Aristide Zolberg had converged on the idea that new states faced a standard and roughly sequential series of crises, challenges, and problems. Resolution of those problems, they argued, permitted states to move on to the next stage en route to a fully effective political regime. In a phrase that reflected their project's normative and policy aspirations, they often called the whole process state- and nation-building. The SSRC committee labeled its crises PIPILD: Penetration, Integration, Participation, Identity, Legitimacy, and Distribution.

Committee members theorized that a) all new states confronted the six crises in approximately this order, b) the more these crises concentrated in time, the greater the social stress and therefore the higher the likelihood of conflict, breakdown, and disintegration, c) in general, new states faced far greater bunching of the crises than had their western counterparts, hence became more prone to breakdown than western states had been. The violence, victimization, and venality of new states' public politics stemmed from cumulation of crises. Presumably superior political science knowledge would not only explain those ill effects but also help national or international authorities steer fragile new states through unavoidable crises.

The SSRC scheme rested on one strong historical premise and two weak ones. On the strong side, the theorists assumed that western states had, on the whole, cre-

ated effective national institutions gradually, in a slow process of trial, error, compromise, and consolidation. More hesitantly, these analysts assumed both that political development everywhere followed roughly the same course and that the course's end point would yield states resembling those currently prevailing in the western world.

Since theorists of political development actually drew regularly on western historical analogies (see e.g. Almond and Powell 1966), SSRC committee members naturally wondered whether a closer look at western history would confirm their scheme. It could do so by showing that the same crises appeared recognizably in the historical record, that they occurred more discretely and over longer periods in older states, that later-developing states experienced greater accumulations of crises, and that bunched crises did, indeed, generate stress, conflict, breakdown, and disintegration. In my guise as a European historian, they therefore asked me to recruit a group of fellow European historians who had the necessary knowledge, imagination, and synthetic verve to do the job. (As we will see later, they were also sponsoring a rival team of European historians, no doubt to check the reliability of my team's conclusions.)

Our assignment: to meet, deliberate, do the necessary research, report our results, criticize each other's accounts, and write a collective book. A remarkable set of talented scholars accepted the challenge: Gabriel Ardant, David Bayley, Rudolf Braun, Samuel Finer, Wolfram Fischer, Peter Lundgreen, and Stein Rokkan. We spent the summer of 1970 together at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (Stanford, California), frequently calling in critics such as Gabriel Almond, Val Lorwin, and G. William Skinner. We presented draft chapters to each other and a few sympathetic critics in Bellagio, Italy during a strenuous week the following year. After multiple exchanges and painstaking editing, we finally published our book in 1975.

Before we began the enterprise, I had produced several essays dissenting from the sorts of breakdown theories that formed the midsection of the committee's scheme (e.g. Tilly 1969). Some committee members may therefore have hoped to convert me to the committee's views. Or perhaps secret skeptics within the committee wanted to raise their colleagues' doubts about the committee's political development scheme (for hints in that direction, see Verba 1971). In either case, they got more than they bargained for. Looked at closely, the relevant Western European history revealed repeated crises, constant struggle, numerous collapses,

far more states that disappeared than survived, and a process of state transformation driven largely by extraction, control, and coalition formation as parts or by-products of rulers' efforts not to build states but to make war and survive.

In an abortive effort to counter the intentionality and teleology of such terms as "state-building" and "political development," my co-authors and I self-consciously substituted what we thought to be the more neutral term "state formation." The term itself caught on surprisingly fast. Unfortunately, it also soon took on teleological tones in the literature on political change (see e.g. Biggs 1999, Braddick 2000, Corrigan and Sayer 1986). Contrary to our intentions, students of state formation in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, or Asia began taking the European experience as a model, and asking why their regions had failed to form proper states (for critiques, see Barkey and Parikh 1991, Centeno 2002). Nevertheless, many readers saw the book as a serious challenge to existing ideas about political development (Skocpol 1985).

What is more, our historical reflections raised the distinct possibility that the processes of state formation were far more contingent, transitory, and reversible than analysts of political development then supposed. Hoping to write the final sentence of the final volume in the SSRC's series of books on political development, I therefore ended my concluding essay with these words:

> But remember the definition of a state as an organization, controlling the principal means of coercion within a given territory, which is differentiated from other organizations operating in the same territory, autonomous, centralized, and formally coordinated. If there is something to the trends we have described, they threaten almost every single one of these defining features of the state: the monopoly of coercion, the exclusiveness of control within the territory, the autonomy, the centralization, the formal coordination; even the differentiation from other organizations begins to fall away in such compacts as the European Common Market. One last perhaps, then: perhaps, as is so often the case, we only begin to understand this momentous historical process – the formation of national states – when it begins to lose its universal significance. Perhaps, unknowing, we are writing obituaries for the state (Tilly 1975: 638).

I lost, alas, my rhetorical bet: a parallel SSRC group of historians working on direct applications of the crisis scheme to the United Kingdom, Belgium, Scandinavia, the

United States, Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Germany, Russia, and Poland under Raymond Grew's leadership took even longer to publish their volume than we did. Editor Grew closed his presentation of the book's findings with words more cautious than my own:

> Models of political development should not tempt us to explain too much, nor be allowed to stimulate too many ingenious answers before the questions are clear. Today's heuristic device must not become tomorrow's assumption. One of the strengths of these essays is that they do not attempt to create a closed system; another is their recognition of many paths to political survival – and of many higher goals. A next step should be the careful formulation of historical (and therefore not just developmental) problems, followed by the comparison of realities rather than abstractions. The Committee's broad categories of political development, like photographs of the earth taken from space, remind us that familiar terrain is part of a larger system, and urge us to compare diverse features that from a distance appear similar. They do not obviate the need for a closer look (Grew 1978: 37).

In short, according to Grew, the crisis-and-sequence scheme may raise some interesting historical questions, but it certainly does not answer them.

Differences between the Tilly and Grew conclusions mark an important choice for historical analysts of political processes.[1] On one side (Grew), we can stress the obdurate particularity of historical experiences, hoping at most to arrive at rough, useful empirical generalizations through close analysis of specific cases. On the other (Tilly), we can use history to build more adequate explanations of politics past and present. Unsurprisingly, this essay recommends the theoretically more ambitious second course, while heartily agreeing with Grew that it requires expert historical knowledge. Not only do all political processes occur in history and therefore call for knowledge of their historical contexts, but also where and when political processes occur influence *how* they occur. History thus becomes an essential element of sound explanations for political processes.

[1] Here and hereafter, "historical" means locating the phenomenon meaningfully in time and place relative to other times and places, "political" means involving at least one coercion-wielding organization as participant or influential third party, and "process" means a connected stream of causes and effects; see Pierson 2004, Tilly 2001a.

Why History Matters

Several different paths lead to that conclusion. Here are the main ones:

- At least for large-scale political processes, explanations always make implicit or explicit assumptions concerning historical origins of the phenomenon and time-place scope conditions for the claimed explanation. Those assumptions remain open to historical verification and falsification. Example: students of international relations commonly assume that some time between the treaty of Augsburg (1555) and the treaties of Westphalia (1648), Europeans supplanted a web of overlapping jurisdictions with a system of clearly bounded sovereign states that then provided the context for war and diplomacy up to the present.

- In the case of long-term processes, some or all features of the process occur outside the observations of any connected cohort of human analysts, and therefore require historical reconstruction. Example: displacement of personal armies, feudal levies, militias, and mercenary bands by centrally controlled national standing armies took several centuries to occur.

- Most or all political processes incorporate locally available cultural materials such as language, social categories, and widely shared beliefs; they therefore vary as a function of historically determined local cultural accumulations. Example: economically, linguistically, ethnically, racially, and religiously segmented regions create significantly different configurations of state-citizen relations.

- Processes occurring in adjacent places such as neighboring countries influence local political processes, hence historically variable adjacencies alter the operation of those processes. Example: the Swiss Confederation survived as a loosely connected but distinct political entity after 1500 in part precisely because much larger but competing Austrian, Savoyard, French, and German states formed around its perimeter.

- Path dependency prevails in political processes, such that events occurring at one stage in a sequence constrain the range of events that is possible at later stages. Example: for all its service of privilege, the entrenchment of the assembly that became England's Parliament by the baron's rebellion of 1215 set limits on arbitrary royal power in England from that point forward.

- Once a process (e.g. a revolution) has occurred and acquired a name, both the name and one or more representations of the process become available as signals, models, threats and/or aspirations for later actors. Example: the creation of an elected national assembly in the France of 1789 to 1792 provided a model for subsequent political programs in France and elsewhere.

In all these ways, history matters. In the case of state transformation, there is no way to create comprehensive, plausible, and verifiable explanations without taking history seriously into account.

Apparently political scientists have learned that lesson since the 1960s. Now and then an economist, sociologist, geographer, or anthropologist does come up with a trans-historical model of state transformation (e.g. Batchelder and Freudenberger 1983, Bourdieu 1994, Clark and Dear 1984, Earle 1997, Friedmann 1977, Gledhill, Bender and Larson 1988, Li 2002). Rare, however, is the political scientist that follows their lead (exceptions include Midlarsky 1999, Taagepera 1997). To be sure, the historicists could be wrong and the unhistorical modelers right. I hope, however, to persuade you that historical context matters inescapably, at least for all but the most fleeting and localized political processes.

Whether the importance of history seems obvious or implausible, however, depends subtly on competing conceptions of explanation. As a first cut, let us distinguish:

a) proposal of covering laws for complex structures and processes

b) the special case of covering law accounts featuring the capacity of predictors within mathematical models to exhaust the variance in a "dependent variable" across some set of differing but comparable cases

c) specification of necessary and sufficient conditions for concrete instances of the same complex structures and processes

d) location of structures and processes within larger systems they supposedly serve or express

e) identification of individual or group dispositions just before the point of action as causes of that action

f) reduction of complex episodes, or certain features of those episodes, to their component mechanisms and processes

In an earlier day, political scientists also explained political processes by means of g) stage models in which placement within an invariant sequence accounted for the episode at hand. That understanding of explanation vanished with the passing of political development.

History *can,* of course, figure in any of these explanatory conceptions. In a covering law account, for example, one can incorporate history as a scope condition (e.g. prior to the Chinese invention of gunpowder, war conformed to generalization X) or as an abstract variable (e.g. time elapsed or distance covered since the beginning of an episode; see Roehner and Syme 2002). Nevertheless, covering-law, necessary-sufficient condition, and system accounts generally resist history as they deny the influence of particular times and places. Propensity accounts respond to history ambivalently, since in the version represented by rational choice they depend on transhistorical rules of decision making, while in the versions represented by cultural and phenomenological reductionism they treat history as infinitely particular.

Mechanism-process accounts, in contrast, positively welcome history, because their explanatory program couples a search for mechanisms of very general scope with arguments that initial conditions, sequences, and combinations of mechanisms concatenate into processes having explicable but variable overall outcomes. Mechanism-process accounts reject covering-law regularities for large structures such as international systems and for vast sequences such as democratization. Instead, they lend themselves to "local theory" in which the explanatory mechanisms and processes operate quite broadly, but combine locally as a function of initial conditions and adjacent processes to produce distinctive trajectories and outcomes (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001, Tilly 2001b).

History and Processes of State Transformation

Across a wide range of state transformation, for example, a robust process recurrently shapes state-citizen relations: the extraction-resistance-settlement cycle. In that process:

Some authority tries to extract resources (e.g. military manpower) to support its own activities from populations living under its jurisdiction.

Those resources (e.g. young men's labor) are already committed to competing activities that matter to the subordinate population's survival.

Local people resist agents of the authority (e.g. press gangs) who arrive to seize the demanded resources.

Struggle ensues.

A settlement ends the struggle.

Clearly the overall outcome of the process varies from citizens' full compliance to fierce rejection of the authorities' demands (Levi 1988, 1997). Clearly that outcome depends not only on the process' internal dynamic but also on historically determined initial conditions (e.g. previous relations between local and national authorities) and on adjacent processes (e.g. intervention of competing authorities or threatened neighboring populations). But in all cases the settlement casts a significant shadow toward the next encounter between citizens and authorities. The settlement mechanism alters relations between citizens and authorities, locking those relations into place for a time.

Over several centuries of European state transformation, authorities commonly won the battle for conscripts, taxes, food, and means of transportation. Yet the settlement of the local struggle implicitly or explicitly sealed a bargain concerning the terms under which the next round of extraction could begin (Tilly 1992, chapters 3 and 4). Individual mechanisms of extraction, resistance, struggle, and settlement compound into a process that occurs widely, with variable but historically significant outcomes, From beginning to end, the process belongs to history.

Consider a second robust process of state transformation: subordination of armed forces to civilian control. Over most of human history, substantial groups of armed men – almost exclusively men! – have bent to no authority outside of their own number. Wielders of coercion have run governments across the world. Yet recurrently, from Mesopotamian city-states to contemporary Africa, priests, merchants, aristocrats, bureaucrats, and even elected officials who did not themselves specialize in deployment of armed force have somehow managed to exert effective

control over military specialists (Bratton and van de Walle 1997, Briant et al. 2002, Creveld 1999, Huters, Wong, and Yu 1997, Khazanov 1993, López-Alves 2000, Wong 1997).

That process has taken two closely related forms. In the first, the course of military conquest itself brought conquerors to state power. Then administration of conquered territories involved rulers so heavily in extraction, control, and mediation within those territories that they began simultaneously to create civilian staffs, to gather resources for military activity by means of those staffs, and thus to make the military dependent for their own livelihoods on the effectiveness of those staffs. In the process, tax-granting legislatures and budget-making bureaucrats gained the upper hand.

In the second variant, a group of priests or merchants drew riches from their priestly or mercantile activity, staffed the higher levels of their governments with priests, merchants, or other civilians, and hired military specialists to carry out war and policing. In both versions of the subordination process, the crucial mechanisms inhibited direct military control over the supply of resources required for the reproduction of military organization.

As in the case of extraction-resistance-settlement processes, the actual outcomes depended not only on internal dynamics but also on initial conditions and adjacent processes. In Latin America, for example, military specialists who had participated extensively in domestic political control recurrently overthrew civilian rule (Centeno 2002). Military men retained more leverage where they had direct access to sustaining resources, notably when they actually served as hired guns for landed elites and when they could sell or tax lootable resources such as diamonds and drugs. Again, a similar process occurs across a wide range of historical experience, but its exact consequences depend intimately on historical context.

Social Movements as Political Innovations

State transformation may seem too easy a case for my argument. After all, since the fading of political development models most political scientists have conducted contemporary studies of state changes against the backdrop of explicit references to historical experience. The same does not hold for the study of social movements. By and large, students of contemporary social movements fail to recognize that they are analyzing an evolving set of historically derived political practices.

Either they assume that social movements have always existed in some form or they treat social movements as contemporary political forms without inquiring into their historical transformations.

Nevertheless, sophisticated treatments of social movements generally assume a broad historical connection between democratization and social movement expansion (Costain and McFarland 1998, Edelman 2001, Foweraker and Landman 1997, Hoffmann 2003, Meyer and Tarrow 1998, Walker 1991). One of the more important open questions in social movement studies, indeed, concerns the causal connections between social movement activity and democratization – surely two-way, but what and how (Ibarra 2003, Tilly 2004, chapter 6)?

Social movements illustrate all the major arguments for taking the history of political processes seriously:

- Existing explanations of social movements always make implicit or explicit assumptions concerning historical origins of the phenomenon and time-place scope conditions for the claimed explanation.

- Some features of social movements occurred outside the direct observations of any connected cohort of human analysts, and therefore require historical reconstruction.

- Social movements incorporate locally available cultural materials such as language, social categories, and widely shared beliefs; they therefore vary as a function of historically determined local cultural accumulations.

- Social movements occurring in adjacent places such as neighboring countries influence local social movements, hence historically variable adjacencies alter the kinds of social movements that appear in any particular place.

- Path dependency prevails in social movements as in other political processes, such that events occurring at one stage in a sequence constrain the range of events that is possible at later stages.

- Once social movements had occurred and acquired names, both the name and competing representations of social movements became available as signals, models, threats and/or aspirations for later actors.

None of these observations condemns students of social movements to historical particularism. Regularities in social movement activity depend on historical context and incorporate historical context, which means that effective explanations of social movement activity must systematically take historical context into account. Like anti-tax rebellions, religious risings, elections, publicity campaigns, special interest lobbying, and political propaganda, social movements consist of standard means by which interested or aggrieved citizens make collective claims on other people, including political authorities. Like all these other forms of politics, the social movement emerges only in some kinds of political settings, waxes and wanes in response to its political surroundings, undergoes significant change over the course of its history, and yet where it prevails offers a clear set of opportunities for interested or aggrieved citizens.

Consider just two historically conditioned aspects of social movements: their repertoires of claim-making performances and their signaling systems. History shapes the availability of means for making collective claims, from the humble petition received by a Chinese emperor to the *pronunciamento* of a nineteenth-century Spanish military faction. Those means always involve interactive performances of some sort, preferably following established scripts sufficiently to be recognizable but not so slavishly as to become pure ritual. They therefore draw heavily on historically accumulated and shared understandings with regard to meanings, claims, legitimate claimants, and proper objects of claims.

In any given historical period, available claim-making performances group linking various pairs of claimants and objects of claims clump into restricted *repertoires:* arrays of known alternative performances. In Great Britain of the 1750s, for example, the contentious repertoire widely available to ordinary people included:

> *attacks on coercive authorities*: liberation of prisoners; resistance to police intervention in gatherings and entertainments; resistance to press gangs; fights between hunters and gamekeepers; battles between smugglers and royal officers; forcible opposition to evictions; military mutinies
>
> *attacks on popularly-designated offenses and offenders*: Rough Music; ridicule and/or destruction of symbols, effigies, and/or property of public figures and moral offenders; verbal and physical attacks on malefactors seen in public places; pulling down and/or sacking of dangerous or offensive houses, including

workhouses and brothels; smashing of shops and bars whose proprietors are accused of unfair dealing or of violating public morality; collective seizures of food, often coupled with sacking the merchant's premises and/or public sale of the food below current market price; blockage or diversion of food shipments; destruction of tollgates; collective invasions of enclosed land, often including destruction of fences or hedges

celebrations and other popularly-initiated gatherings: collective cheering, jeering, or stoning of public figures or their conveyances; popularly-initiated public celebrations of major events (e.g. John Wilkes' elections of the 1760s), with cheering, drinking, display of partisan symbols, fireworks, etc., sometimes with forced participation of reluctant persons; forced illuminations, including attacks on windows of householders who fail to illuminate; faction fights (e.g. Irish vs. English, rival groups of military)

workers' sanctions over members of their trades: turnouts by workers in multiple shops of a local trade; workers' marches to public authorities in trade disputes; donkeying, or otherwise humiliating, workers who violated collective agreements; destroying goods (e.g. silk in looms and/or the looms themselves) of workers or masters who violate collective agreements

claim making within authorized public assemblies (e.g. Lord Mayor's Day): taking of positions by means of cheers, jeers, attacks, and displays of symbols; attacks on supporters of electoral candidates; parading and chairing of candidates; taking sides at public executions; attacks or professions of support for pilloried prisoners; salutation or deprecation of public figures (e.g. royalty) at theater; collective response to lines and characters in plays or other entertainments; breaking up of theaters at unsatisfactory performances

Not all British claim makers, to be sure, had access to all these performances; some of the performances linked workers to masters, others market regulars to local merchants, and so on. In any case, the repertoire available to ordinary Britons during the 1750s did not include electoral campaigns, formal public meetings, street marches, demonstrations, petition drives, or the formation of special-interest associations, all of which became quite common ways of pressing claims during the nineteenth century. As these newer performances became common, the older ones disappeared.

That is where the social movement repertoire comes in. Originating in Great Britain and North America during the later eighteenth century, a distinctive array of claim-making performances formed that marked off social movements from other varieties of politics, underwent a series of mutations from the eighteenth century to the present, and spread widely through the world during the nineteenth and (especially) twentieth centuries. Social movements constituted sustained claims on well identified objects by self-declared interested or aggrieved parties through performances dramatizing not only their support for or opposition to a program, person, or group, but also their worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment. (Social movement participants always claim to represent some wider public, and sometimes claim to speak for non-participants such as fetuses, slaves, or trees.) The array of performances constituting social movement repertoires has shifted historically, but from the earliest days it included formation of named special-interest associations and coalitions, holding of public meetings, statements in and to the press, pamphleteering, and petitioning.

Social movement repertoires amply illustrate the importance of history. Although the British-American eighteenth century repertoire brought new elements together, each element had some sort of available precedent. British governments repressed popular, private, non-religious associations that took public stands as threats to the rights of Parliament. Yet they had accepted or even promoted religious congregations, authorized parish assemblies, grudgingly allowed workers' mutual-aid societies that refrained from striking and other public claim making. Authorities had also long tolerated clubs of aristocrats and wealthy city-dwellers. (The term "club" itself derives from the practice of clubbing together for shared expenses, and thus taking on a resemblance to a knotted stick.) More rarely and indirectly, social movement repertoires also drew on authorized parades of artisans' corporations, militias, and fraternal orders. Adaptations of such parades figured extensively in Irish conflicts from the eighteenth century to the present (Bryan 2000, Farrell 2000, Jarman 1997, Kinealy 2003, Mac Suibhne 2000).

Eighteenth century innovations broadened those practices in two different directions, converting authorized religious and local assemblies into bases for campaigns and creating popular special-purpose associations devoted to public claim-making rather than (or in addition to) private enjoyment, improvement, and mutual aid. The broadening occurred through struggle, but also through patronage by sympathetic or dissident members of the elite. More generally, the internal histories of particular forms of claim making, changing relations between potential claimants and

objects of claims, innovations by political entrepreneurs, and overall transformations of the political context combined to produce cumulative alterations of social movement repertoires (Tilly 1993).

The formation of the social movement repertoire included substantial losses as well as considerable gains. Many of the avenging, redressing, and humiliating actions that had worked intermittently to impose popular justice before 1800 – seizures of high-priced food, attacks on press gangs, donkey-riding of workers who violated local customs, and others – became illegal. Authorities whose predecessors had mostly looked the other way so long as participants localized their actions and refrained from attacking elite persons or property began to treat all such actions as "riots," and to prosecute their perpetrators. Establishment of crowd-control police as substitutes for constables, militias, and regular troops in containment of demonstrations and marches temporarily increased the frequency of violent confrontations between police and demonstrators. Over the long run, however, it narrowed the range of actions open to street protestors, promoted prior negotiation between social movement activists and police, encouraged organizers themselves to exclude unruly elements from their supporters, and channeled claim-making toward non-violent interaction. Path dependence prevailed, as early innovations in the social movement repertoire greatly constrained later possibilities.

Social movement *signaling systems* similarly illustrate the importance of history. From the start, social movements centered on campaigns in support of or opposition to publicly articulated programs by means of associations, meetings, demonstrations, petitions, electoral participation, strikes, and related means of coordinated action. Unlike many of its predecessors, the social movement form provided opportunities to offer sustained challenges directed at powerful figures and institutions without necessarily attacking them physically. It said, in effect, "We are here, we support this cause, there are lots of us, we know how to act together, and we could cause trouble if we wanted to."

As compared with the many forms of direct action that ordinary people had employed earlier, social movement performances almost never achieved in a single iteration what they asked for: passage of legislation, removal of an official, punishment of a villain, distribution of benefits, and so on. Only cumulatively, and usually only in part, did some movements realize their claims. But individual performances such as meetings and marches did not simply signal that a certain number of people had certain complaints or demands. They signaled that those people had created

internal connections, that they had backing, that they commanded pooled resources, and that they therefore had the capacity to act collectively, even disruptively, elsewhere and in the future.

More exactly, from early on social movement performances broadcast WUNC: worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment. How they broadcast those attributes varied historically, but in early stages the signaling had something like this character:

> *Worthiness:* sober demeanor, neat clothing, presence of dignitaries
>
> *Unity:* matching badges, armbands, or costumes, marching in ranks, singing and chanting
>
> *Numbers:* headcounts, signatures on petitions, messages from constituents
>
> *Commitment:* mutual defense, resistance to repression, ostentatious sacrifice, subscription, and benefaction

If any of these elements – worthiness, unity, numbers, or commitment – visibly fell to a low level, the social movement lost impact. This signaling system helps explain two centuries of dispute between authorities and participants over whether pleasure-seekers or vandals had joined a performance, how many of the people present happened to be on the premises for other purposes or out of idle curiosity, how many people actually took part in the performance, and whether the police used undue brutality. Social movement performances challenge authorities and other political actors to accept or reject both a set of claims and the existence of a distinctive collective political actor. But the relevant signaling systems change and vary historically.

Social Movements in History

With these lessons in mind, let us look more closely at the early development of social movement claim making. We can usefully begin a history of social movements as distinctive forms of political action in the 1760s, when after the Seven Years War (1756-1763) critics of royal policy in England and its North American colonies began assembling, marching, and associating to protest heightened taxation and arbitrary rule (Tilly 1977). Braving or evading repression, they reshaped existing prac-

tices such as middle class clubs, petition marches, parish assemblies, and celebratory banquets into new instruments of political criticism. Although social movement activity waxed and waned with state toleration and repression, from the later eighteenth century the social movement model spread through Western Europe and North America, becoming a major vehicle of popular claim making.

In the British Isles, for example, by the 1820s popular leaders were organizing effective social movements against the slave trade, for the political rights of Catholics, and for freedom of association among workers. In the United States, antislavery was becoming a major social movement not much later. American workers' movements proliferated during the first half of the 19th century. By the 1850s social movements were starting to displace older forms of popular politics through much of Western Europe and North America.

Throughout the world since 1850, social movements have generally flourished where and when contested elections became central to politics. Contested elections promote social movements in several different ways:

> First, they provide a model of public support for rival programs, as embodied in competing candidates; once governments have authorized public discussion of major issues during electoral campaigns, it becomes harder to silence that discussion outside of electoral campaigns.
>
> Second, they legalize and protect assemblies of citizens for campaigning and voting. Citizens allowed to gather in support of candidates and parties easily take up other issues that concern them.
>
> Third, elections magnify the importance of numbers; with contested elections, any group receiving disciplined support from large numbers of followers becomes a possible ally or enemy at the polls.
>
> Finally, some expansion of rights to speak, communicate, and assemble publicly almost inevitably accompanies the establishment of contested elections. Even people who lack the vote can disrupt elections, march in support of popular candidates, and use rights of assembly, communication, and speech.

Once social movements existed, nevertheless, they became available for politics well outside the electoral arena. Take temperance: opposition to the sale and public

consumption of alcohol. In Britain and America, organized temperance enthusiasts sometimes swayed elections. American anti-alcohol activists formed a Prohibition Party in 1869. But temperance advocates also engaged in direct moral intervention by organizing religious campaigns, holding public meetings, circulating pledges of abstinence, and getting educators to teach the evils of alcohol. In both Great Britain and the United States, the Salvation Army (founded in London, 1865) carried on street crusades against alcohol and for the rescue of alcoholics without engaging directly in electoral politics. American agitator Carrie Nation got herself arrested 30 times during the 1890s and 1900s as she physically attacked bars in states that had passed, but not enforced, bans on the sale of alcohol. Social movements expanded with electoral politics, but soon operated quite outside the realm of parties and elections.

Antislavery action in the United States and Britain (that is, England, Wales, Scotland) illustrates the social movement's rise (d'Anjou 1996, Drescher 1986, 1994, Eltis 1993, Grimsted 1998, Klein 1999, chapter 8). Mobilization against slavery and increasing salience of national elections – with slavery itself an electoral issue – reinforced each other in the two countries. The timing of antislavery mobilization is surprising. Both the abolition of the slave trade and the later emancipation of slaves occurred when slave-based production was still expanding across much of North and South America. The Atlantic slave trade fed captive labor mainly into production of sugar, coffee, and cotton for European consumption. North and South American slave labor provided 70 percent of the cotton processed by British mills in 1787 and 90 percent in 1838. Although slave production of sugar, coffee, and cotton continued to expand past the mid-nineteenth century, transatlantic traffic in slaves reached its peak between 1781 and 1790, held steady for a few decades, then declined rapidly after 1840.

Outlawing of slavery itself proceeded fitfully for a century, from Haiti's spectacular slave rebellion (1790 onward) to Brazil's reluctant emancipation (1888). Argentina, for example, outlawed both slavery and the slave trade in its constitution of 1853. Between the 1840s and 1888, then, the Atlantic slave trade was disappearing and slavery itself was ending country by country. Yet slave-based production of cotton and other commodities continued to increase until the 1860s. How was that possible? Increases in slave-based commodity production depended partly on rising labor productivity and partly on population growth within the remaining slave population. Slavery did not disappear because it had lost its profitability. Movements

against the slave trade, then against slavery itself, overturned economically viable systems.

How did that happen? Although heroic activists sometimes campaigned publicly against slavery in major regions of slave-based production, crucial campaigns first took place mostly where slaves were rare but beneficiaries of their production were prominent. For the most part, anti-slavery support arose in populations that benefited no more than indirectly from slave production. The English version of the story begins in 1787. English Quakers, Methodists, and other anti-establishment Protestants joined with more secular advocates of working class freedoms to oppose all forms of coerced labor. A Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, organized in 1787, coordinated a vast national campaign, an early social movement.

During the next two decades, British activists rounded out the social movement repertoire with two crucial additions: the lobby and the demonstration. Lobbying began literally as talking to Members of Parliament in the lobby of the Parliament building on their way to or from sessions. Later the word generalized to mean any direct intervention with legislators to influence their votes. British activists also created the two forms of the demonstration we still know today: the disciplined march through streets and the organized assembly in a symbolically significant public space, both accompanied by coordinated displays of support for a shared program. Of course all the forms of social movement activism had precedents, including public meetings, formal presentations of petitions, and the committees of correspondence that played so important a part in American resistance to royal demands during the 1760s and 1770s. But between the 1780s and the 1820s British activists created a new synthesis. From then to the present, social movements regularly combined associations, meetings, demonstrations, petitions, electoral participation, lobbying, strikes, and related means of coordinated action.

Within Great Britain, Parliament began responding to popular pressure almost immediately, with partial regulation of the slave trade in 1788. By 1806, abolition of the slave trade had become a major issue in parliamentary elections. In 1807, Parliament declared illegal the shipping of slaves to Britain's colonies, effective at the start of the following year. From that point on, British activists demanded that their government act against other slave-trading countries. Great Britain then pressed for withdrawal of other European powers from the slave trade. At the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, the major European powers except for Spain and

Portugal agreed to abolition of the trade. Under economic and diplomatic pressure from Britain, Spain and Portugal reluctantly withdrew from officially sanctioned slave trading step by step between 1815 and 1867. From 1867 onward, only outlaws shipped slaves across the Atlantic.

Soon after 1815, British activists were moving successfully to restrict the powers of slave owners in British colonies, and finally – in 1834 – to end slavery itself. Although French revolutionaries outlawed both the slave trade and slavery throughout France and its colonies in 1794, Napoleon's regime restored them ten years later. France did not again abolish slavery and the slave trade until the Revolution of 1848. With Brazil's abolition of slavery in 1888, legal slavery finally disappeared from Europe and the Americas. Backed aggressively by state power, British social movement pressure had brought about a momentous change.

As of the later nineteenth century, social movements had become widely available in western countries as bases of popular claim making. They served repeatedly in drives for suffrage, workers' rights, restrictions on discrimination, temperance, and political reform (Buechler 1990, Calhoun 1995, Gamson 1990, McCammon and Campbell 2002, McCammon, Campbell, Granberg and Mowery 2001, Tarrow 1998). During the twentieth century, they proliferated, attached themselves more firmly to the mass media, gained followings in a wider variety of class, ethnic, religious, and political categories. More frequently than before, social movements also supported conservative or reactionary programs – either on their own or (more often) in reaction to left movements. Italian and German fascists, after all, employed anti-leftist social movement strategies on their ways to power (Anheier, Neidhardt and Vortkamp 1998). As a result of incessant negotiation and confrontation, relations between social movement activists and authorities, especially police, changed significantly (Fillieule 1997, della Porta 1995, della Porta and Reiter 1998).

Regularities in social movements, then, depended heavily on their historical contexts. Eighteenth century social movement pioneers adapted and combined forms of political interaction that were already available in their contexts: the special-purpose association, the petition drive, the parish meeting, and so on. They thereby created new varieties of politics. Forms of social movement activity mutated in part as a consequence of changes in their political environments and in part as a result of innovations within the form itself on the part of activists, authorities, and objects of claims (Tilly and Wood 2003). Early innovations stuck and constrained later innovations not only because widespread familiarity with such routines as demonstrating facilitated

organizing the next round of claim making, but also because each innovation altered relations among authorities, police, troops, activists, their targets, their rivals, their opponents, and the public at large. When movement repertoires diffused, they always changed as a function of differences and connections between the old setting and the new (Chabot and Duyvendak 2002). Social movement politics has a history.

Concluding Reflections

So does the rest of politics. We could pursue the same sort of argument across a great many other historically grounded political phenomena: democratization and de-democratization, revolution, electoral systems, clientelism, terror, ethnic mobilization, interstate war, civic participation, and more. The conclusion would come out the same: every significant political phenomenon lives in history, and requires historically grounded analysis for its explanation. Political scientists ignore historical context at their peril.

So should political science quietly dissolve into history? Must professional political scientists turn in their badges for those of professional historians? No, at least not entirely. I would, it is true, welcome company in the thinly populated no man's land at the frontiers of history and political science. But history as a discipline has its own peculiarities. Historians do not merely take serious account of time and place. They revel in time and place, defining problems in terms of specific times and places, even when doing world history. One ordinarily becomes a professional historian by mastering the sources, languages, institutions, culture, and historiography of some particular time and place, then using that knowledge to solve some problem posed by the time and place. The problems may in some sense be universal: how people coped with disaster, what caused brutal wars, under what conditions diverse populations managed to live together. The proposed solutions may also partake of universality: one step in the evolution of humanity, persistent traits of human nature, the tragedy of vain belief. But the questions pursued belong to the time and place, and adhere to the conversation among students of the time and place.

Although we might make exceptions for area specialists and students of domestic politics, on the whole political scientists' analytic conversations do not concern times and places so much as certain processes, institutions, and kinds of events. Let me therefore rephrase my sermon. As the analysis of state transformations and social movements illustrates, political scientists should continue to work at ex-

plaining processes, institutions, and kinds of events. To do so more effectively, however, they should take history seriously, but in their own distinctive way.

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