

Global, conventional and warring movements and the suppression of contention.

Themes in contentious politics research

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Dossier

Abstract

Contentious events often come in waves, but they are seldom homogeneous. A series of contentious events over the past two years were the result of the global financial crisis that began in the United States in 2008 and ultimately diffused around the world. But it was in Greece and the European Union that the crisis hit hardest. There, conventional protest, violence, and political contention combined. The Greek/Euro crisis has three lessons to teach us about the current themes in social movement research. The first lesson has to do with the nature of the capitalist crisis that triggered these events. The second lesson is that there are limits to globalization and internationalization. The third lesson is that while the financial crisis sparked a great deal of contention, it was differently affected by the political opportunity structure of each country. This article investigates three meanings of the term “social movement society” that became popular in the North in the 1990s: *global movements*; *contained movements*; and *warring movements*. It closes with some speculations about the relationship between the movements of recent years and protest policing and the increasing danger of suppression of all movements as the result of the fear of terrorism.

Keywords: Social movement society, protest policing, repression, global movements, warring movements, fiscal crisis.

Contentious events often come in waves, but they are seldom homogeneous. Consider this sequence of events in Western Europe in the month of May, 2010:

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- In Athens, three people were killed as protesters set fire to a bank during a general strike over planned austerity measures in response to the financial crisis.
- In Madrid and Paris the major union federations called a strike of public sector workers over their respective governments' tough new austerity program to meet the same crisis.
- In Germany Chancellor Merkel was heckled in the Bundestag for her support of the Greek Bailout plan (CRS 2009; 2010).

Every one of these contentious events was the direct or indirect result of the global financial crisis that began in the United States in 2008 and ultimately diffused around the world. In the United States itself, there was a populist reaction to the crisis: the so-called “Tea Party” challenged members of Congress at town meetings, dressed up as revolutionary soldiers and supported conservative candidates in the Congressional elections of 2009 and 2010. Even in little Iceland, midway between Europe and America, outbursts of public protest had forced the Prime Minister and his cabinet to resign.

But it was in the European Union that the crisis hit hardest (CRS 2009:8). As pressure mounted on the near-bankrupt Greek government and on the Euro, EU leaders became alarmed. For if Greece defaulted, not only would it affect the French and German bankers who held the largest part of its debt; the entire monetary structure of the Eurozone might crumble. (CRS 2010: 11-12). In response, France and Germany, in cooperation with the IMF, began to consider offering financial guarantees to staunch the contagion that was threatening to bring down the Euro (p.9-12).

But at this point, the unity of the EU began to crumble. As violent protests targeted both the Greek government and the EU and strikes broke out in France and Spain, opposition to the bailout forced Chancellor Merkel to delay offering Germany's support till the cost of the bailout mushroomed. In the event, her party lost the regional election and she emerged from the crisis politically weakened.

The Greek/Euro crisis has four lessons to teach us about the current themes in social movement research. The first lesson has to do with the nature of the capitalist crisis that triggered these events.

In the 1920s, an international financial crisis was also touched off by the excesses of the international banking community. But when it came down to it, there were no international institutions to overcome national interests, as Polanyi pointed out in his *The Great Transformation* (2001[1944]). In 2008-10, the spread of the crisis to Europe involved at least three international institutions: the EU, the European Central Bank, and the IMF. Globalization and internationalization have produced a far more integrated response to the financial crisis than our predecessors had available to cope with the great depression (TARROW, 2005).

But the second lesson is that there are limits to globalization and internationalization. True, the financial crisis sped rapidly from the United States to the European Union because of the institutional links between these two hegemons; but the varied contentious responses to it reveal great differences between Europe and the U.S., and within Europe itself. (Indeed, in fear of the crisis spreading to the other southern European countries, somewhat *arrogante* northern Europeans began to refer to the four southern European countries and Ireland as the PIIGS (uncomfortably close to the English for the Portuguese term “*porco*”).

The third lesson is that while the financial crisis sparked a great deal of contention, it was differently affected by the political opportunity structure of each country: As Greek anarchists torched the center of Athens, French workers used the austerity crisis as a pretext to demonstrate for broader social issues, the Spanish struck around trade union issues, the Germans heckled their Chancellor, and the American Tea Party threatened to take over the Republican Party. There are limits to globalization and to the unity of responses to the financial crisis (Urreiztieta Valles 2008). Indeed, as Bringel and Echart Muñoz recently wrote, what some have called the international antiglobalization movement “could not articulate a convincing response [when] faced with a system that has been marked by multidimensional crises like those that were denounced by antiglobalization protests since its beginnings” (BRINGEL & ECHART MUÑOZ, 2010).

Why begin this article with this story and with these three points? In the 1990s, it seemed to many in the United States that a

“movement society” was developing in the global North (MEYER & TARROW, 1998). That debate continues (DALTON, 2006), but what is still not clear is the meaning of the term “movement society”. There are three possible meanings of the term.

- *Global movements*: That globalization and its discontents have created a wave of resistance across the planet, or at least in different regions of the global North or global South (Smith 2004).
- *Contained Movements*:¹ That unconventional collective action is becoming so widespread and so common, and the response of authorities to them so institutionalized, that movements are becoming subsumed in conventional politics;
- *Warring Movements*: that today’s global society is becoming increasingly turbulent.

In order to assess what has changed in the world of contentious politics today, I will examine these three meanings of “the movement society”. I will close an issue that has been too little present in social movement studies: how states and the “forces of order” are responding to these changes in contentious politics.

Global movements

In the past decade there has been an extraordinary emphasis on what has been called *global* social movements in the United States (SMITH, 2004), Western Europe (DELLA PORTA & TARROW, 2005), and in Latin America. The fact that the first World Social Forum was held in Porto Alegre helps to explain this, but a good deal has to do with the exciting idea that globalization has made domestic political conflict appear to be secondary to world systemic factors.

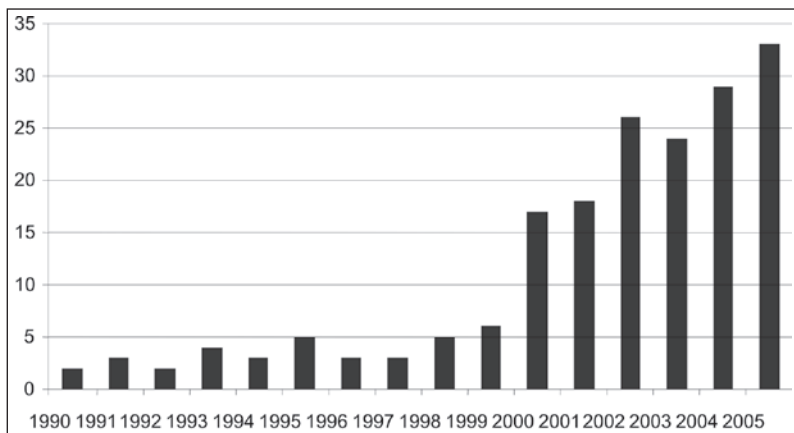
1 Bringel, in his accompanying paper, translates this term as “movimentos contidos”; another possible translation suggested by Bringel is *movimentos convencionalis*, in the sense that it captures both the dimension of routinization of protest as well the response of authorities. I thank Breno Bringel for his carefully reading and interpretation of this text.

Under the broad umbrella of globalization, since the turn of the new century, there has been a wave of challenges to states and elites. In their excellent synthesis, Bringel and Echart Muñoz divide these challenges into four phases:

- First, from the end of the 1980s, mainly in Europe, a number of counter-summits were organized against the major international financial institutions, beginning with a spectacular protest against the IMF in Berlin in 1988 (GERHARDS and RUCHT 1992);
- This trend continued during the 1990s but spread to the global South, with protests against the MAI in South America and in North America against NAFTA;
- The third phase began in Seattle, with the battle against the World Trade Organization, and spread to protests across the continent and the world against the G-8, the IMF, the World Bank, the EU, the World Economic Forum (WOOD, 2003). It saw a new and more militant actor – the Black Block – using violent and provocative methods;
- Fourth, the war in Iraq and the World Social Forum brought a return to more contained forms of protest. The U.S. and other antiwar movements resembled earlier peace movements much more than the more disruptive global justice campaigns (WOEHRLE *et al.* 2009), while the WSF was marked by “the majoritarian presence of the European and Latin American middle class and the growing presence of parties and political leaders like Chavez or Lula” (BRINGEL & ECHART MUÑOZ, 2010, p.31-32).

The Italian scholar Mario Pianta and his collaborators have carefully traced the numerical development of these transnational civil society events and counter-summits. I reproduce them in Figure One so that my readers can see that there has been a major increase in the number of such events, especially during the third and fourth phases that Bringel and Echart Muñoz describe in their paper.

Figure 1 – Growth of global civil society events, 1990 - 2005



Source: PIANTA, MARIO & MARCHETTI, 2007. “The Global Justice Movements: The Transnational Dimension.” In: *The Global Justice Movement: Cross-National and Transnational Perspectives*.

Pianta’s findings relate mainly to the “forum process”, which spread from Switzerland and Brazil to the rest of Latin America and to Western Europe over the last decade (della Porta ed., 2007) and within Brazil (SCHERER-WARREN, 2006). But there are two points that Pianta’s figures do not show. First, states and their police forces have responded vigorously against these new forms of contention (DELLA PORTA & TARROW, 2010). That will be the final theme of this article. Second, the forum model that has diffused across Western Europe and Latin America in the last decade is not fundamentally contentious.

In our book, *Dynamics of Contention*, Doug McAdam, Charles Tilly and I defined contentious politics as “episodic, public, collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects when at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to the claims and the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at least one of the claimants (MCADAM, *et al.* 2001, p.5).”² Does

2 Of course, this does not mean that the “contentious politics” program is the only one of interest in the current state of social movement research. As Breno Bringel writes in his contribution to this symposium, “*O Poder em movimento pelo público brasileiro deve ser realizada de forma paralela com textos mais recentes*

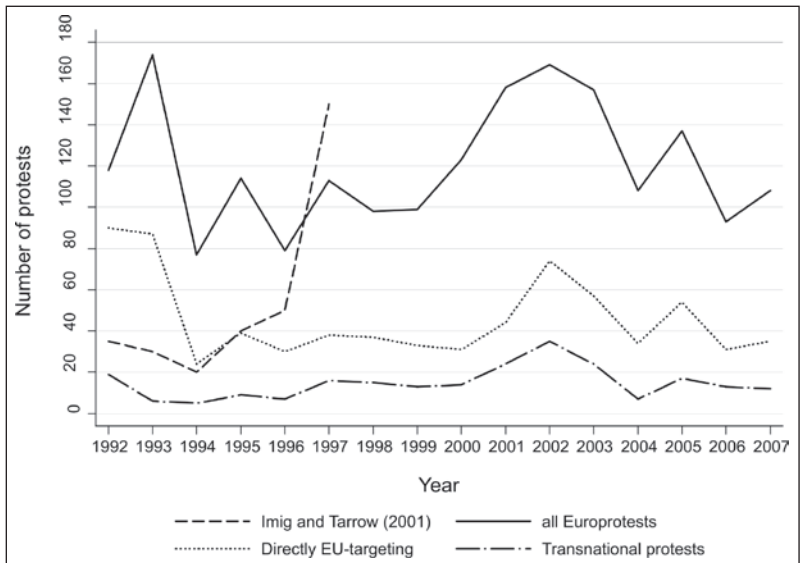
this mean that the forums are not social movements? Not necessarily: movements can be political and nonpolitical, and contentious politics includes interactions among movements, other kinds of actors, and institutions.

Using this definition, we find a great deal of contentious politics in Western Europe (TARROW, 2009a; 2009b; IMIG & TARROW, 2001). But although, with Doug Imig, I found a rise in transnational contentious events during the late 1990s in Europe – the most integrated region of the world – they remained no more than five percent of the total on average that we found in the years 1984-1997 (IMIG AND TARROW, 2001, p.35). Not only that: even as the EU was expanding and taking on new powers after the turn of the century, replications of our work show little or no increase in the proportion of contentious events that are organized transnationally in Europe. Basing their analysis on a large dataset of contentious events similar to ours but extending up to 2008, Katrin Uba and Fredrik Ugglå find no change in the number of transnational protests in Europe during the decade since we collected our data, as this graph from their research shows.³

vinculados ao debate internacional atual, com o objetivo de que não ocorra uma “defasagem espaço-temporal” que impeça um engajamento e inserção sincrônica do debate brasileiro com a literatura produzida e discutida em outros lugares.” He mentions in particular the recent text by Alonso, (2009) “As teorias dos movimentos sociais: um balanço do debate”. *Lua Nova*, São Paulo, n.76, PP.49-86. Also worthy of mention is the forthcoming symposium in *Mobilization* (2011), which includes efforts to implement and modify the contentious politics project. The general point, with which I agree, is that the traditional tendency to turn to European theorists – especially Alain Touraine – for inspiration has now been joined by links to North American theorizing.

- 3 Similarly, a study by Lori Polonyi-Staudinger of environmental group supranational actions in three European countries even shows a decline in these actions after the turn of the new century. See Polonyi-Staudinger, 2009, for these findings.

Figure 2 - Supranational Activity by Nonstate Actors in the European Union, 1992-2007



Source: Reproduced from Katrin Uba and Fredrik Ugglå, "Protest Actions against the European Union 1992-2007" (Forthcoming).

Let me be clear: I do not believe that concept of globalization is a chimera. For example, as I have written, I think there is a stratum of “*cosmopolitas arraigados*” in the world today (TARROW, 2009b) developing among younger generations in both Latin America and Western Europe. Della Porta’s work on the European Social Forum validates this hypothesis for Western Europe (2007). I also think that an increasing number of domestic protests and campaigns are framed by their organizers as global – both in Europe and in Latin America (TARROW, 2005, ch.3; 2009b). And I think that globalization has stimulated the formation of a large number of civil society networks, both in general and in Latin America (KECK & SIKKINK, 1998; VON BÜLOW, 2010). But most of these networks are at least semi-institutionalized and many are basically coalitions of NGOs.

Why do I insist on this distinction? The lack of growth in contentious transnational activities over the past decade even in the most integrated region of the world – Western Europe – leaves me skeptical of claims that there global social movements are beginning

to overtake domestic contention, as was frequently claimed at the turn of the new century (FLORINI, 2003; CLARK, 2003). This does not mean that there have been no changes in the world of contentious politics. Two of them are *contained movements* and *warring movements*.

Contained movements

In his synthesis of citizen politics in four Northern democracies, Russell Dalton found that participation in protest was more common at the end of the period he studied [1974 - 1999] than at the beginning (2006: 68). In addition, in both the United States and Western Europe, there has been a broadening of the kinds of organizations that engage in contentious politics. Such organizations often combine institutional advocacy with more contentious activities (Minkoff, 1994). Even older organizations - like staid conservation groups in the United States or the once-compliant labor unions in Germany - have turned increasingly to marches and demonstrations. Finally, new social actors have been increasingly visible in protest since the 1960s. Middle-class Britons protest against new highways or the barbarism of the hunt; students, workers and truck drivers block the roads against pension reform in France; Catholic priests and Protestant ministers demonstrate for peace in the Netherlands; shopkeepers protest against stricter tax collection in Italy; consumers break into supermarkets in Argentina: alongside the familiar figures of students, peasants, and workers, well educated middle-class groups have become familiar figures in the contentious politics of the 1990s and 2000s (JIMÉNEZ SANCHEZ, ND).

The most striking shift has been the increasing presence of women in contentious politics. Although men still protest more often than women, writes Dalton, "there is evidence that this pattern is changing with a narrowing of gender roles" (2006, p.70). European women have been increasingly found in contentious politics. In Spain, Jiménez Sánchez found an increase in the proportion of women participating in demonstrations from 35 percent in 1980 to over 47 percent in 2008.⁴ This trend is not limited to the United

4 Cited with permission from Jiménez Sánchez N.D., p. 13.

States or Western Europe: Sonia Alvarez notes that the longest-lasting military authoritarian regime in South America – Brazil’s – also engendered “what is arguably the largest, most diverse, most radical, and most successful women’s movement in contemporary Latin America.” (ALVAREZ, 1990).

Does the increasing use of nonviolent forms of contentious politics by broader strata of citizens add to the challenges to routine politics? Or does it mean that the *boundaries* of routine politics are expanding? If the former is the case, then we may be witnessing a growth of less stable political formations than parties, elections and interest groups; if the latter, then we may be seeing a conventionalization of protest, reducing its capacity to disrupt and adding new forms of action to the contained repertoire of contention, just as the strike was institutionalized in the last century (TARROW, 2009, ch.5).

The institutionalization of contention has increased the interaction between movement activists and political parties and elections (MCADAM & TARROW, 2010). For example, in the movement against the Iraq War in the United States a substantial sector of the protesters were part of “the party in the street” (HEANEY & ROJAS, 2007). When Barack Obama was elected President in November 2008, most of these activists left the movement to support the Democratic party. In Spain, Jiménez Sánchez found that movement participants had a substantial impact on election outcomes (2006). And a substantial proportion of the participants in the European Social Forums studied by della Porta are active in political parties or trade unions at home (DELLA PORTA, 2007).

Latin America is ripe with such movement/institutional interactions. In Argentina, Javier Auyero found a close connection between the *piqueteros* and the Peronist party (2007). In Bolivia, Carew Boulding found a close relationship between protest and voter turnout (2009). And the links between contentious and institutional politics are obvious in Brazil (HUNTER, 2010, SILVA, 2010). In Brazil, Hunter argues that “While the PT’s collective profile increasingly came to resemble that of a typical “catchall” party, individual PT politicians remained highly committed to their organization and did not start to behave like the self-interested careerists found in abundance in other Brazilian parties” (HUNTER, 2007, p.440; also see HUNTER, 2010).

The lack of autonomy between parties and movements has often been criticized by lefty-leaning scholars of Latin American social movements (PETRAS & VELTMEYER, 2005; see the critique of this position in Silva, 2010). But rather than bewail the lack of autonomy of movements from parties, we would do better to examine the particular mechanisms that link parties and movements (MCADAM & TARROW, 2010). For example, while parties may serve as a “transmission belt” for movements, the opposite may also be the case (KECK, *ibid.*). Even where movements have given way to parties, the presence of a social movement on the margins of a progressive party in power cannot help but affect its policies (TARROW, 1982).

One thing has certainly changed: as unconventional political action has become more widespread, it has become more complicated. This is not only because of the presence of a larger number of sophisticated organizations competing for space in the movement field (MINKOFF, 1994), but also because the technical threshold for participation has risen. Activism is no longer only a matter of going to a café for a meeting or joining friends or neighbors for a march or demonstration; it increasingly requires internet skills, the ability to form coalitions with like-minded groups, and the courage to get up in public (either virtually or “offline”) to speak one’s mind (DALTON, 2006, p.74).

This complexity means that the “movement society” that David Meyer and I wrote of a decade ago may actually be increasing the participation gap between rich and poor, between the well-networked and the relatively isolated, and between those with full-time occupations and those with disposable income and free time (SCHLOZMAN, VERBA & BRADY, 2010). Even well equipped guerilla groups and terrorist organizations have mastered the technical skills of the Internet, but ordinary citizens have not. This takes me to the final meaning of “the movement society” – movement actors that employ violence as part of their regular repertoire of contention.

Warring movements

In Western Europe, violent Catholic nationalism in Northern Ireland was only pacified in the late 1990s (TILLY & TARROW, 2007,

p.145-51). Rightwing parties like the French *Front National*, the Flemish *Vlaams Belang*, and the Austrian Freedom Party, and skinhead violence have gained support from those suffering from rising unemployment and anti-immigrant phobia. And from the Middle East and South Asia, Islamist violence has spread into the capitalist core, often drawing on the alienation of second-generation immigrants from South Asia and the Middle East.

From these forms of contentious politics, Latin America has not been immune. Building a unique dataset of the repertoire of contentious performances in seven Latin American countries, James Franklin found a worryingly high proportion of events involving violence in the region – especially in Central America. For the average of the countries that he studied, one third of the events were violent attacks on persons; another ten percent were violent protests, two percent were forceful seizures, and another five percent were destructive challenges. Only a fifth of the events were various forms of nonviolent challenges and another 28 percent were “symbolic protests”.

Figure 1: Distribution of Contentious Tactics, Latin America; in Percentages

Country	Demos	Strikes & boycotts	Non-Violent intervention	Violent Intervention	Paramilitary attacks	Totals
Argentina	46.0	25.4	8.0	10.3	10.3	100.0
Brazil	46.7	33.6	4.1	11.5	4.1	100.0
Chile	29.2	8.4	13.0	25.3	24.0	100.0
Guatemala	8.1	2.3	2.3	2.7	84.7	100.0
Mexico	47.3	13.5	25.3	11.7	2.1	100.0
Nicaragua	11.8	3.0	4.9	3.3	55.1	100.0
Venezuela	30.0	17.1	7.1	40.0	5.7	100.0
Sample	28.1	11.5	10.0	10.9	39.5	100.0

Source: Data provided thanks to James C. Franklin from his unpublished ms. “People Power versus the State: Tactics and Outcomes of Contentious Political Challenges in Latin America.” Ohio Wesleyan University, 8/7/2010.

The United States has not been bereft of “warring movements” either. In the West and Southwest, militant anti-governmental movements and armed militias have defied the federal government, attacking churches and Jewish institutions and, increasingly, immi-

grants from south of the border. In Waco, Texas, the members of a religious sect were incinerated when federal officials tried to eject them from a ranch complex. In Oklahoma City, a pair of rightwing militants destroyed a federal building and took the lives of hundreds of citizens with a bomb intended to strike a blow against the state (WRIGHT, 2007). And the recent Supreme Court decisions in favor of unlimited gun ownership are bound to increase the amount of death and destruction.

The spread of violent, sectarian, and self-enclosed identity movements raise troubling questions for social movement theory: about the increase of hatred, the recrudescence of ethnic conflict, the decline of civility, and the internationalization of conflict which the canon of northern social movement theory has not prepared us to answer. An entire new specialty in the study of political violence has developed in the last decade, using both traditional case study methods and the newer tools of multivariate analysis.⁵ Strangely enough, from this debate about “warring movements,” students of social movements have been largely absent.

Why is this? To some extent, it is the result of the hyper-specialization to which the social sciences are prone (MCADAM *et al.* 2001). To some extent, it is the result of the evolution of the phenomena we study (e.g., the PT was a product of social movement politics during the transition, but today, it resembles many other “catch-all parties”. But the major reason is a function of biography: many students of social movements became interested in movements during the reformist protest cycle of the 1960s in the North and the democratization period in the South. To the extent that we have allowed these biographical experiences to shape our models we will not be able to understand the new wave of warring movements.

Is the movement society going to be contained or will it dissolve into organized violence? The evidence is not yet in: For some scholars the distinction is territorial: in the North it is the least

5 This literature is too vast to summarize easily. Major turning points in English are Collier and Hoeffler, 2004, Collier and Sambanis, eds. 2005, Fearon and Laitin, 2003, Kalyvas, 2003, Weinstein, 2006, and Elisabeth Wood, 2000 and 2003. For a review of four of these important studies, see Tarrow, 2007.

transgressive forms of contention – e.g., participation in peaceful demonstrations, signing petitions – that they see increasing, while they have mainly studied warring movements in the global South. But a third possibility should be considered: that we are witnessing a growth in both contained and violent forms of contention in *both* regions of the world – what Tilly and I called “a composite system” (TILLY & TARROW, 2007, ch.8). The most worrying possibility is that in countries in which contained and violent contention exist side by side, state and police strategies are eventually extended from the repression of violent protesters to suppression of non-violent citizens.

Think of the repression of non-violent protest in Brazil under the military dictatorship: where the “forces of order” fear that terror lurks behind every door, even non-violent protest risks suppression. This takes me to my final theme: the expansion and extension of the suppression of protest (DELLA PORTA & TARROW, 2010). But even in relatively democratic systems, like Mexico today, the “war” against narcotraffickers has unleashed forms of police repression that were uncommon even during the period of PRI one-party rule.

The suppression of contention

Physical repression is, of course, the reflexive response of most police forces, but it is only one mechanism that elites use to counter opponents. What is more worrying is that in states that have recently emerged from dictatorship and those that have been the targets of Islamist violence, there are forms of suppression that do not rise to the level of violent repression.⁶ States can cut off protesters’ funding; they can pass onerous tax laws and permitting requirements; they can impose restrictions on people who have been

6 I do not claim to be an expert on the suppression of protest in Latin America, but it was interesting that, at the symposium in Florianópolis that led to the current publication, I found very few panels that dealt with the suppression of conflict in post-authoritarian systems like Brazil. Bringel provides a lead in this direction when he writes, in his contribution to this volume, of “*os novos mecanismos a través dos quais os Estados e as forças policiais vem respondendo frente a este padrão híbrido de movimentos contidos e beligerantes. A repressão física nunca foi o único mecanismo de contenção das lutas sociais, mas na atualidade parecem emergir formatos mais refinados e complexos de controle dos protestos.*”

booked at demonstrations; and they can limit patronage to moderate groups and regulate behavior in their factories to discourage dissent. In addition, even in democratic systems, governments have substantial influence on how the media treat protest and control the content of the internet.

Authoritarian states have always striven to control protest and protesters, but in the new century, a more serious issue is whether control through nonviolent suppression is increasing in liberal democratic states. In the wake of the terrorist outrages of 2001 in the United States, 2004 in Spain, and 2007 in Britain, changes in police practice raise concern about the suppression of all forms of protest. Because I know it best, and because there is a substantial literature on there, I will limit myself to the effects of the War on Terror on civil liberties from recent evidence from the United States.⁷

After the outrages of September 11, 2001, the swift passage of the U.S. Patriot Act left little room for advocates of civil liberties to have their say; In the United Kingdom, even before the subway bombings of 2007, there was a steady increase of police surveillance through the placement of thousands of video cameras in public places. In both the U.S. and the United Kingdom, there has been increased use of preventive detention and, in the case of terrorism suspects from Afghanistan, the use of torture and detention without trial. In June, 2010, the Supreme Court interpreted the Patriot Act to ban domestic groups from providing advice – even advice on how to engage in peaceful negotiations – to groups that had been labeled terrorist by the government.⁸

How have Americans resisted these threats to civil liberties? In protesting against the U.S. Patriot act, American activists have employed three different strategies: cause lawyers using the courts, private associations defending civil liberties, and civil liberties organizations organizing at the local level:

7 Among the many studies that followed the passage of the U.S. Patriot Act, the most accessible are Margulies, 2006, Sidel, 2007, and Posner and Vermeule, 2007.

8 Go to <http://writ.news.findlaw.com/mariner/20100707.htm> for a scathing interpretation of the effects of this decision on civil liberties.

Since the civil rights and women's movements, scholars of law and social movements in the U.S. have been aware of the many ways in which movements use the courts. But only with the aggressive expansion of executive powers under the second Bush Administration has the role of cause lawyers become prominent. In conflicts over the *habeas corpus* rights of Guantánamo detainees; in the protection of privacy rights; and in the growing issue of undocumented immigrants, lawyers have been organizing in ways that strikingly resemble how social movements form networks, frame their claims, and interact with authorities (MARGULIES, 2006; MCCANN & DUDAS, 2006; SIDEL, 2007).

Private associations, like the American Bar Association, have also been important in defending citizens' rights against government intrusion. An unusual example was the campaign launched by the American Librarians' Association denouncing an article of the U.S. Patriot Act allowing the FBI access to the records of library loans of individuals. Working with more typical defenders of civil liberties, like the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union), the librarians exposed not only the threats, but the absurdities of the U.S. Patriot Act (SIDEL, 2007).

More typical of traditional social movement activity was the grassroots movement created to protect First Amendment rights. Beginning in New England, where the institution of the town meeting had its start, and based at first on established civil liberties groups, a national network of supporters of first amendment rights was formed (VASI & STRANG, 2009). What was most interesting about this network was that, as it diffused, the range of its participants broadened, from the "usual suspects" on the progressive and liberal left to more mainstream groups and associations.

My inclusion of lawyers, librarians, and local civil liberties groups in an article about contentious politics may surprise scholars of social movements. After all, such groups do not employ the traditional disruptive performances that are usually associated with social movements; they have not created sustained movement organizations; and they frame their claims around traditional values of American political culture. But if we want to understand the broader range of contentious politics, and not simply social movements,

these examples are evidence that contention against state expansion takes forms beyond the traditional form of the social movement. Just as social movements often cross the boundary of the polity into routine politics, mainstream actors occasionally venture into the less familiar precincts of transgressive politics.

Challenges for social movement research

Such an expansion of the traditional social movement field into the broader range of contentious politics is becoming established in the United States. It may already be having an impact in Latin America (URREIZTIETA VALLES, 2008; SILVA, 2010). This perspective leads to five issues that seem important to be pursued at the present time.

First, the study of movements that do not target the state. In recent years there have been a number of “stockholder revolts” in both the United States and Europe. These do not look much like traditional social movements, but they certainly qualify as contentious politics, as my colleague Sarah Soule has argued (SOULE, 2009). As Latin American countries enter the phase of advanced industrialization and pluralistic democratic politics, the next generation of scholars of contention will have to take these protests more seriously.

Second, we also need to explore how the new forms of collective action - particularly internet-based campaigns - are affecting contentious politics. Do they challenge existing approaches to contentious politics, or will they eventually be absorbed into the repertoire of contention, much as the newspaper and television were in previous epochs? A number of scholars argue forcefully that the internet has transformed not only ways of communicating but also the basic organization of social movements (BENNETT, *et al.* 2008). Others, like Tilly and Wood (2009), have been more cautious. These issues are already producing interesting research and will produce more in the years to come.

Third, recently, there has been a growing interest in social networks both in the United States and in Latin America (DIANI & MCADAM, 2003; GOHN, 2010; KECK & SIKKINK; 1998; Mische, 2008;

SCHERER-WARREN, 2006; 2007; VON BÜLOW, 2010). This is a refreshing development, but there is a danger that emphasis on studying microstructures like networks will satisfy itself with identifying the links between the nodes in networks and fail to specify the mechanisms and processes that translate network structure into action.⁹

Fourth, the interest in globalization has led to more intense exploration of the theme of movement diffusion, as Bringel points out in his accompanying article. In the 1980s and 1990s, it was sufficient for there to be a co-occurrence of protests – for example, against IMF conditionality -- for theorists to infer diffusion from one site to another in Latin America and elsewhere (Walton and Shefner, 1994). But co-occurrence can result from structural or conjunctural similarity; scholars are now focusing on the mechanisms of learning, brokerage and scale shift to understand whether and how actual diffusion is taking place (GIVAN, ROBERTS & SOULE, 2010).¹⁰

And what of the “warring movements” I discussed earlier? Are they likely to continue to attack secular societies with the same ferocity that they exhibited in the attacks of 2001 in the United States and in 2007 in Great Britain? Or will they, like previous waves of violent movements, eventually become institutionalized? Let me close with a reflection on this impossible question.

9 Within Brazilian studies, a good example of how network analysts can specify mechanisms and processes in a dynamic framework can be found in Ann Mische's study of youth organizations (Mische 2008).

10 As Bringel writes, “A noção de ‘difusão’ tem uma longa trajetória no estudo dos movimentos sociais nos Estados Unidos ...como aqueles elementos e mecanismos que permitem entender como discursos, demandas, experiências e repertórios de protesto se disseminam entre diferentes lugares, em alguns casos muitos distantes uns dos outros. Existiriam três formas principais de difusão: relacional (a emulação de novas formas de contestação por parte de atores com relações prévias de confiança, intimidade ou comunicação regular com aqueles que iniciaram ditas formas), não-relacional (a emulação de novas formas de contestação por parte daqueles atores que aprendem estas a partir de meios impessoais como os meios) e mediada (a emulação de novas formas de contestação por parte de atores sem laços prévios com aqueles que iniciaram estas formas e a partir da intervenção de terceiros que mantém uma relação de confiança tanto com os iniciadores como com os que a adotam).” For a good introduction to current North American and Western European work on diffusion, see Givan, Roberts and Soule, eds. 2010.

The citizens of modern states have lived through such “moments of madness” before (ZOLBERG, 1972). It is enough to remember that severed heads were paraded around Paris on pikes during the great French Revolution. That revolution produced the Terror and the first modern dictatorship under Napoleon; but it also produced the citizen army, the modern administrative state, the end of feudalism and the career open to talents, and a highly influential beacon of modern constitutional politics -- the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. The same has been true of the mixed messages of many cycles of contention in the past.

Of course, recent violent movements are better armed, have a broader cultural valence, and are more broadly diffused than the movements that broke out in Paris in 1789. Does this mean that the end of the cold war and the European liberation movements of 1989 are giving way to a permanent state of *disorder*? Have the resources for violent collective action become so accessible, have integralist identities become so widespread, and have militants so freed themselves from the national state that a violent movement society is resulting? Or will the current wave of ethnic and religious movements be partially defeated, partially domesticated, and partially mediated by the political process, as in previous cycles of contention?

The violence and intolerance that we have seen during the first decade of the new century constitute a frightening trend. But this is not the first great wave of movement in history nor will it be the last. If its dynamic comes to resemble the social movements that we have encountered previously, then its power will at first be ferocious, uncontrolled, and widely diffused, but will ultimately prove ephemeral and be institutionalized. If so, as Zolberg wrote of the 1968s movement in Paris, it will disperse “like a flood tide which loosens up much of the soil but leaves alluvial deposits in its wake” (ZOLBERG, 1972:206).

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Resumo

Movimentos globais, convencionais e combativos e a supressão da contestação: temas de pesquisa das políticas contestatórias

Eventos contestatórios frequentemente acontecem em ondas, embora poucas vezes sejam homogêneos. Uma série de eventos contestatórios que ocorreram durante os dois últimos anos foram resultado da crise financeira global que começou no ano 2008 nos Estados Unidos e acabou se disseminando ao redor do planeta. Contudo, foi na Grécia e na União Europeia que a crise pegou mais forte. Lá, protesto convencional, violência e contestação política se combinaram. A crise grega/europeia nos fornece três lições relativas aos atuais temas de pesquisa sobre movimentos sociais. A primeira se relaciona com a natureza da crise capitalista que impulsionou estes eventos. A segunda é que há limites para a globalização e a internacionalização. A terceira é que, embora tenha gerado contestação considerável, a crise financeira foi diferencialmente afetada pela estrutura de oportunidades políticas de cada país. Este artigo investiga três dos significados do termo “sociedade dos movimentos sociais”, que se tornou popular no Norte durante os anos noventa: movimentos globais, movimentos restritos e movimentos combativos. Finaliza com algumas especulações sobre a relação entre os movimentos de anos recentes, o policiamento dos protestos e o crescente perigo de supressão de todos os movimentos como resultado do medo do terrorismo.

Palavras-chave: sociedade dos movimentos sociais, policiamento dos protestos, repressão, movimentos globais, movimentos combativos, crise fiscal.

