



# Dynamics of Contention (Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics)

*By Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, Charles Tilly*

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**Dynamics of Contention (Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics)** By Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, Charles Tilly

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

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

'Dynamics of Contention - written by three of the leading scholars of social movements and 'contentious politics' - is undoubtedly the most ambitious, and arguably the most important, book on social movements (and related phenomena) written in the past two decades.' *Sociology*

### **About the Author**

Doug McAdam is Professor of Sociology at Stanford University and the former Director of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (CASBS). He is the author or co-author of 13 books and some 75 articles in the area of political sociology, with a special emphasis on the study of social movements and revolutions. Among his best known works are *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, a new edition of which was published in 1999; *Freedom Summer* (1988), which was awarded the 1990 C. Wright Mills Award as well as being a finalist for the American Sociological Association's best book prize for 1991; and *Dynamics of Contention* (2001) with Sid Tarrow and Charles Tilly. He is also the author of the forthcoming book, *A Theory of Fields* (with Neil Fligstein). He is a two-time former Fellow of CASBS, a recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2003).

Sidney Tarrow is Maxwell M. Upson Professor of Government and Professor of Sociology at Cornell University. Tarrow's first book was *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy* (Yale, 1967). In the 1980s, after a brief foray into comparative local politics, he returned to social movements with a collaborative volume with B. Klandermans and H. Kriesi, *Between Structure and Action* (JAI, 1988); then to a reconstruction of Italian protest cycle of the late 1960s and early 1970s, *Democracy and Disorder* (Oxford, 1989). His most recent books are *Power in Movement* (Cambridge, 1994, 1998) (with Doug McAdam and Charles Tilly), *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge, 2001) (with Doug Imig), *Contentious Europeans* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2001) and (with Donatella della Porta) *Transnational Protest and Global Activism* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2004). A fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, he is currently Vice-President of the APSA Section on Comparative Politics.

Charles Tilly (1929-2008) was the Joseph L. Battenwieser Professor of Social Science at Columbia University. His books include *"Why?"* (Princeton) and *"Democracy"*.

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#### **Deanna Ratliff:**

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