symbolism of landless peasants everywhere. But when the movement gained resonance in the capital and in North America and Europe, it was mainly as an "indigenous movement," and the message of movement leaders shifted from peasant-based claims to demands that were heavily inflected with the symbolism of indigenous Indians oppressed by five hundred years of white and mestizo power. The cultural turn is a refreshing departure from the heavy structuralism that had weighted down previous accounts of contentious politics (see Chapter 1), but if it fails to connect framing, identity, and emotion to the political process, it risks becoming every bit as deterministic as its structuralist predecessor.

What is the solution? Framing, identity construction, and emotions cannot be simply read like a "text," independent of the strategies of movements and the conditions in which they struggle. Out of a cultural reservoir of possible symbols, movement entrepreneurs choose those they hope will mediate among the cultural understandings of the groups they wish to appeal to, their own beliefs and aspirations, and their situations of struggle to create solidarity and animate collective action (Laitin 1988). To relate text to context, the grammar of culture to the semantics of struggle, we need to turn from framing, identity construction, and emotions to how movements intersect with their contexts. We need to examine, in particular, the structure of opportunities and the constraints in which they operate. We turn to this important intersection in the next chapter.

8

Threats, Opportunities, and Regimes

A COLLAPSING REGIME

In the late 1980s, contentious politics arose in the highly centralized and police-and-party controlled Soviet Union. Mark Beissinger documented the rise and dynamics of contentious politics there – which began as a wave of peaceful demonstrations, strikes, and protest marches, but evolved into violent nationalist-inspired riots and militarized conflicts (Beissinger 2002). Figure 8.1 shows what Beissinger found when he employed a protest event analysis to see what was happening during the last years of the Soviet Union:

How could so massive a wave of political contention develop in so centralized a regime after decades of repression? The simplest answer was provided by Alexis de Tocqueville. Because people act on opportunities, he observed, "the most perilous moment for a bad government is one when it seeks to mend its ways" (1955: 176–177). Tocqueville was writing of the collapse of the French Old Regime; had he been present two hundred years later, he might well have applied his theory to the Soviet Union. There, as in France in the 1780s, an international power mired in corruption and torpor and unable to compete with a more dynamic market-oriented society (Bunce 1985; cf. Skocpol 1979) sought to reform itself from within. Incoming party secretary Mikhael Gorbachev was convinced that his country could not survive as a world power without reform. As a result, the late 1980s "engendered a process of liberalization that sparked an explosion of organized extra-state political activity" (Fish 1995: 32).

As was to be expected in so centralized a system, liberalization began at the top, with a change in official thinking and policy on both foreign policy and questions of participation and association. Gorbachev had proposed a modest concept of socialist pluralism, which "amounted to de facto toleration of the formation of some small, non-state citizens' organizations" (Ibid.). But it did not take long for the new possibilities he offered to stimulate more independent initiatives. For example, a group called "Memorial," dedicated to investigating

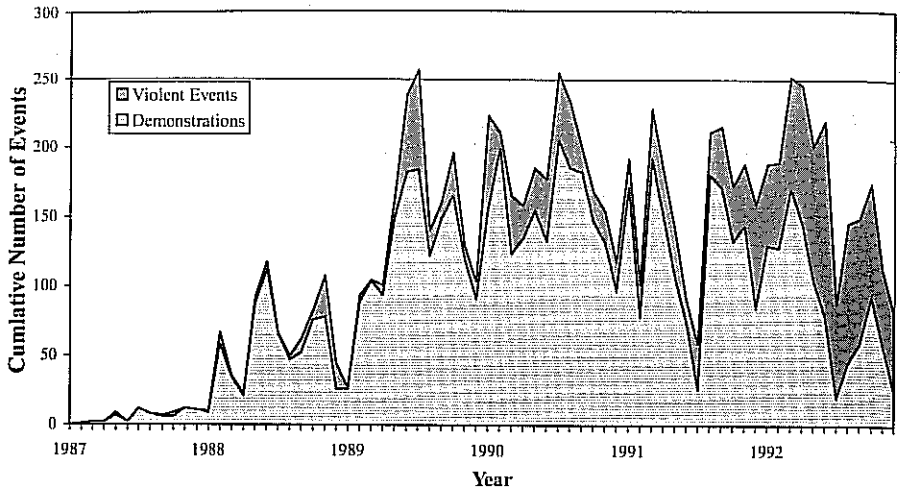

FIGURE 8.1. Demonstrations and Violent Events in the Soviet Union and Its Successor States, 1987–1992. *Source:* Original data provided by Mark Beissinger, from his *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State.* Cambridge University Press, 2002.

the crimes of Stalinism, quickly formed; another, called "Citizen's Dignity," dedicated to promoting human rights, soon followed (Ibid.); and eventually, a reform faction developed within the ruling Communist Party, calling for movement toward a multi-party system.

To some extent, Gorbachev's desire for liberalization was based only on the idea of stimulating more open discussion (*glasnost*). But he quickly realized that without a renovation of the political class, his plans would be stymied by official obstruction. As a result, he transformed the usually formalistic elections to the USSR Congress of People's Deputies into "the first even partially open and competitive national election in the history of the Soviet Union" (Fish, pp. 35–36). Although the election's rules reserved a third of the seats for party-controlled representatives, it conferred on independents the mantle of legitimacy. "Perhaps of greatest moment," writes Steven Fish, "the balloting engendered the closest thing that the populace had ever known to a real election campaign" (p. 35).

But the reformers were few and disorganized. Lacking internal resources and possessing weak connective ties and little mutual trust, they divided into competing factions and parties (Fish, pp. 35. ff). What they profited from was external support – like that accorded them when the secretary of the Moscow Communist Party Committee, Boris Yeltsin, gave informal support to a conference of political discussion groups called "Social Initiative for Perestroika" (p. 32). External help also appeared from the coal miners of the Kuzbass and the Donbass, who went on strike in 1989, and from Eastern Europe, where Gorbachev's reforms – and particularly his removal of the threat of Red Army intervention – triggered a wave of democratization movements

(Fish, pp. 39–41). These "allies" – both conscious and involuntary, internal and external – added to the confidence of insurgents in the USSR that change was inevitable.

Not all the stirrings of dissent were aimed at democratization. Soon after liberalization began at the center, long-repressed nationalist sentiments began to stir in the Soviet Union's far-flung minority republics. First in Georgia and the Baltic states, then in Armenia, Ukraine, and the central Asian republics, separatist movements began to mobilize. In many cases, they resorted to violence against other ethnic groups or the center; in some, such as Kazakhstan, Communist Party elites turned into peripheral nationalists practically overnight (Tilly and Tarrow 2007: 104–105). Beissinger's data in Figure 8.1 show that as the cycle of contention gathered steam, more and more of it took violent forms, mainly from among nationalist groups in the periphery of the USSR, who threatened and were threatened by other groups and by the state.

As 1990 dawned, these developments were accompanied by a decline in the state's capacity for repression. As Fish concluded:

> The center and the party could prevent, obstruct, and coerce; but they could no longer even pretend to initiate, create, and convince.... A motley conglomeration of autonomous social organizations, spearheading a popular movement for democracy, had rendered power visible.... In doing so, they had begun to push it toward its demise (p. 51).

Seeing the growing prospect of the regime's collapse, in August 1991 conservative elements in the Communist Party elite launched a countermovement, bringing tanks onto the streets of Moscow, and threatening a return to the harsh Stalinist regime that Gorbachev had tried to liquidate. The threat was opposed by Yeltsin, who rallied the populace and other elements of the army in a dramatic standoff at the Moscow White House. The coup plotters were defeated, but Gorbachev's power was broken, and Yeltsin emerged as leader and officiated over the dissolution of the Soviet Union (Bonnell, Cooper, and Freiden 1994).

WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE?

First, in a pattern strikingly close to what Tocqueville would have predicted, a cycle of reform begun at the top triggered *a spiral of opportunities and threats.* It offered political opportunities to groups seeking liberalization through institutional means. This encouraged other groups, who mobilized, using the opportunities they opened. Third, this sapped the elite's will to resist and ate away at the centralized structure of the USSR. Fourth, a countermovement threatened both reformers and peripheral nationalists and was defeated, finally, by Yeltsin, an opportunistic reformer who put together a coalition built around the core Russian Republic.

The turbulence unleashed by Gorbachev's reforms not only produced opportunities; it posed a number of *threats* – to members of the elite whose positions in the state and in the Communist Party apparatus were threatened by them;

to the majority Russian ethnic group whose dominant position was undercut by peripheral separatism; and to "certified" minorities whose position in some peripheral Republics was threatened by others, such as the Ajerbaijanis, who were attacked by minority Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. Threats and opportunities combined in a major challenge to the Soviet regime, bringing about its eventual collapse.

Finally, we saw a process typical of the beginning of *regime change:* combinations of old and new repertoires; new actors like Memorial alongside old ones like the Communist Party and newly revived ones like the separatist movements, which took advantage of the chaos at the center to stake their claims; threats of revanchment from party and military elites attempting to stop the slide to democracy and dissolution. Opportunities, threats, and regime change came together in the former Soviet Union, producing a new and hybrid form of regime.

In this chapter, I will examine, first, political opportunities, then threats; finally, I will turn to how changes in regimes intersect with processes of contentious politics.

Opportunities and Threats

Contention increases when people gain access to external resources that convince them that they can end injustices and find opportunities in which to use these resources. It also increases when they are threatened by costs, which outrage their interests, their values, or their sense of justice, but they still see a chance to succeed. When institutional access opens, rifts appear within elites, allies become available, and state capacity for repression declines, challengers see opportunities to advance their claims. When these are combined with high levels of threat but declining capacity for repression, such opportunities produce episodes of contentious politics, sometimes producing changes in regimes.

It is time to define these terms:

Opportunities I will define, following Jack Goldstone and Charles Tilly, as "the [perceived] probability that social protest actions will lead to success in achieving a desired outcome" (2001: 182). "Thus," they continue, "any changes that shift the balance of political and economic resources between a state and challengers, that weaken a state's ability to reward its followers or opponents or to pursue a coherent policy, or that shift domestic or outside support away from the regime, increases opportunities" (pp. 182–183).

Threats, which are often seen as only the "flip side" of opportunities, are actually analytically distinct. Threat relates to the risks and costs of action or inaction, rather than the prospect of success. "Let us label the costs that a social group will incur from protest," continue Goldstone and Tilly, "or that it expects to suffer if it does not take action, as a 'threat.' A group may decide to bear very high costs for protest," they conclude, "if it believes the chances of success are high, but the same group may decide to avoid even modest costs of protest if it believes the chances of succeeding are low" (p. 183).

Regime Change: Regimes consist of regular relations among governments, established political actors, challengers, and outside political actors, including other governments. Regime change is change that inserts new actors into these relations, reduces the power of regime members, or imposes new relations among them (Tilly and Tarrow 2007: Chapters 4 and 5). Not all changes in the balance of opportunity and threat change regimes, but all regime change is based on changes in opportunities and threats

One way of understanding the importance of threat in triggering contention is suggested by the "prospect theory" of the late Stanford psychologist Amos Tversky (see Quatrone and Tversky 1988). Tversky and his collaborators argued that individuals react differently to prospective gains and losses. They claimed that individuals employ decisional heuristics that are contextually contingent. "An individual's attitude toward risk depends on whether the outcomes are perceived as gains or losses, relative to the reference point" (p. 722; also see Berejikian 1992).

But this does not mean that resource-poor people or those living under authoritarian regimes are always bereft of opportunities. It is how threats and opportunities combine, rather than shifts in the prospect of success alone, that shapes decisions regarding collective action (Goldstone and Tilly 2001). Just as minority ethnic groups seized the opportunity of chaos at the center to nibble away at the Soviet Union, my research in Southern Italy showed how desperately poor peasants seized parts of the *latifundia* in the rapidly opening opportunity structure when fascism was defeated at the end of World War II (Tarrow 1967). In the very different circumstances of highland Peru, poor peasants seized the land they claimed their ancestors had lost when the opportunity structure opened (Hobsbawm 1974). In the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s, shifts in opportunity and threat were sufficiently great that a momentous change in regime transpired.

FROM SOCIETAL TO POLITICAL STRUCTURATION

Before the 1960s, most students of social movements stressed long-term structural threats or short-term deprivations as the sources of collective action. Initially, observers in both Western Europe and the United States were struck by how changes in modern society had expanded the incentives for contention. They focused on the "why" of mobilization – for example, whether "life-space" changes or "post-material attitudes were spurring contention. But they could not easily explain why people would lend support to movements during certain periods of history and not others, and why some countries within the West were experiencing more sustained contention than others. To answer those questions, it was necessary to trace how underlying social structure and mobilization potential were transformed into action. In such a transformation, the role of political opportunities and constraints was crucial, as observers of the 1960s could see from an earlier episode of contention: the Great Depression.

STRIKE WAVES AND POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY

The relationship among threat, opportunity, and mobilization can be illuminated by looking at the differences in working class mobilization in different Western countries in the 1930s. Other things being equal, workers are more likely to go on strike in boom times than in depression.[1] The logic of the connection is clear: Prosperity increases employers' need for labor, just as tight labor markets reduce the competition for jobs. As workers learn this, they demand higher wages, shorter hours, or better working conditions. As a result, other things being equal, the strike rate follows the curve of the business cycle upward when a declining unemployment pool leaves employers prey to the pressure of the labor market and downward when the demand for labor declines.[2]

The depression of the 1930s saw the rise of a number of worker mobilizations in Europe and the United States. We would normally expect such an economic crisis with widespread unemployment to depress contention. But in some countries of the West, industrial workers struck, demonstrated, and occupied factories in response to sackings and reductions in pay, while in others they did not, or they allowed themselves to be repressed. While workers in Britain languished through most of the Great Depression and German workers were brutally repressed by the Nazis, French and American workers reacted to the crisis with unprecedented levels of contention.

How can we explain the increase in industrial insurgency by hard-pressed workers in France and the United States, while in Germany and Britain, workers accepted their fate? The answer, I propose, lies in changes in the opportunities and threats that surrounded the different working classes. Strike waves were felt in France and the United States in the 1930s, and not in Germany or Britain, because the reform administrations that came to power in France in 1936 and in America in 1933 showed a willingness to innovate in political-economic relationships and a reluctance to support the suppression of labor. Of course, all the Western working classes suffered the threat of unemployment in the Great Depression, but it was the opening of political opportunities and the relaxation of threats of repression offered by the French Popular Front and the American New Deal that encouraged labor insurgency in those countries, and not the depth of workers' grievances or the extent of their resources.

Returning to the present, we will see that political opportunities are seized and transformed by a variety of challengers under many different conditions. Our first task will be to classify the dimensions of opportunity that help shape movements. The second will be to specify threat more precisely, and to show

[1] A long and somewhat technical literature is available on the relations between economic conditions and strikes. The most thorough summary and assessment is found in John Kennan's "The Economics of Strikes" (1986) in the *Handbook of Labor Economics*, eds. Orley Ashenfelter and Richard Layard.

[2] The most synthetic interpretation of the economic sources of the wage explosions of the late 1960s is David Soskice, "Strike Waves and Wage Explosions, 1968–1970: An Economic Interpretation." in Colin Crouch and Alessandro Pizzorno, eds. *The Resurgence of Class Conflict in Western Europe Since 1968*. Vol. 2, (1978).

how both police repression and general suppression discourage protest. The third will be to investigate how state structure and prevailing strategies of the state shape contention. We will also see that political opportunities are not the result of objective structures; they must be perceived to bring about mobilization, and this depends on the unleashing of a number of mechanisms of contention (McAdam et al. 2001).

Dimensions of Opportunity and Threat

By the concept of political opportunity, I mean consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political environment or of change in that environment that provide incentives for collective action by affecting expectations for success or failure (Gamson and Meyer 1996). Compared with theorists of resource mobilization (see Chapter 1), writers in the political opportunity tradition emphasize the mobilization of resources *external* to the group.[3] They also emphasize mechanisms in the immediate environment that trigger mobilization such as the following:

- The attribution of opportunity or threat
- The availability of potential allies
- The formation of coalitions, both on the margins of and within the polity
- The framing of entire episodes of contention

Political opportunities sometimes center on particular groups – as our example of workers in the 1930s suggested – and opportunities for protest are greater in some regions or cities than in others (Agnew ed. 1997: Part 4; Eisinger 1973). But frequently, movements emerge because general prospects for mobilization have expanded – as was the case when the American peace, student, and women's movements of the late 1960s took advantage of a generally widening opportunity structure (see Chapter 10). Some movement sectors are particularly affected by changes in opportunities – as was the peace movement in the 1980s (Meyer 1990) – but more often, opportunities signaled to some are also perceived and taken advantage of by others.

"OBJECTIVE" AND PERCEIVED OPPORTUNITIES

Political opportunities may not be apparent all at once to all potential challengers. Indeed, there is no such thing as "objective" opportunities – they must

[3] The ultimate source of political opportunity theory was Charles Tilly's *From Mobilization to Revolution* (1978: Chapter 4). Also see David Snyder's and Tilly's article, "Hardship and Collective Violence in France" (1972). Explicit building blocks in the United States were Doug McAdam, *The Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency* (1999 [1982]), Anne Costain, *Inviting Women's Rebellion* (1992), Suzanne Staggenborg, *The Pro-Choice Movement* (1991), and David Meyer, *A Winter of Discontent: The Nuclear Freeze and American Politics* (1990). Explicitly comparative use of the concept was made by Herbert Kitschelt in his "Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest" (1986), and in Tarrow, *Democracy and Disorder* (1989a) and "Struggle, Politics and Reform" (1989b).

be *perceived* and *attributed* to become the source of mobilization (McAdam et al. 2001: Chapter 2; Meyer and Minkoff 2004). This means that communication and learning are important mechanisms in mobilization around opportunities. It also means that short-term changes in opportunity cannot compensate for weaknesses in cultural, ideological, and organizational resources (Kriesi 1995).

Individuals and groups may be constrained from acting collectively by threats of repression that are more apparent than real. This was undoubtedly the case in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union before 1989, because citizens were unaware of how weak their regimes really were (Kuran 1991; Lohmann 1994). By the same token, insurgents may launch themselves into action because they see opportunities but fail to perceive the threats that authorities hold in reserve. This was the case during the "Hundred Flowers" campaign in Maoist China, when the apparent opening of the regime was a pretext to bring dissidents into the open, where they could be identified and repressed.

The perception and attribution of opportunities have two crucial correlates.

First, what we might call "pseudo-opportunities," that is, when opportunities are perceived but have little or no objective existence. This can lead to disaster, as it did for the second group of strikers at the Honda plant we saw during the 2010 strikes in China (see Chapter 6).

Second, the sequencing of opportunities within cycles of contention (see Chapter 10). Early challengers who achieve success reveal the vulnerability of elites and institutions to weaker players, who may believe they will enjoy the same advantages as their predecessors (McAdam 1995). But weak actors who attempt to follow in the footsteps of stronger ones may be doomed to failure, either because they lack the same level of resources or because authorities have learned how to organize against them. Both of these were the causes of failures among the later "color revolutionaries" in Central Asia in 2002–2005. Insurgents in this region attempted to follow the examples of the Slovakians, Serbs, and Ukrainians whose electoral revolutions had succeeded, but without their resources; after authorities had become aware of the danger, their challenges were savagely repressed (Bunce and Wolchik 2006).

Although some scholars have expanded the use of the term "opportunities" to include "discursive opportunities" (Koopmans and Olzak 2004; Bröer and Duyvendak 2009) and "organizational opportunities" (Kurzman 1998), such conceptual expansion risks allowing virtually any change in the environment to be seen as part of "opportunity structure."[4] For this reason, it seems more useful to restrict the concept to factors in the environment that visibly and proximately open up the prospect of success (Goldstone and Tilly 2001). Most important among such factors are (1) opening of access to participation for new

[4] Other scholars have further expanded the concept to include other dimensions, for example, to "gendered opportunity structure" (McCammon 2001) or the "legal opportunity structure" (Pedriana 2006).

actors; (2) evidence of political realignment within the polity; (3) availability of influential allies; and (4) emerging splits within the elite. For the same reason, it seems most useful to limit the concept of threat to the state's and other actors' capacity or will to control dissent.

INCREASING ACCESS

Sensible people do not often attack well-fortified opponents when opportunities are closed; gaining some access to participation can provide them with such incentives. But are people who possess full political rights any more likely to engage in contention than those with none? Peter Eisinger argues that the relationship between protest and political opportunity is not linear but curvilinear: Neither full access nor its absence produces the greatest degree of protest. Eisinger explains that in closed systems, contention is restrained by fear of repression, while in fully open ones, prospective protesters turn to more institutionalized channels. Taking his cue from Tocqueville, Eisinger (1973: 15) writes that protest is most likely "in systems characterized by a mix of open and closed factors."[5] His research on American cities demonstrated that urban protest movements in the 1960s were most likely to emerge at intermediate levels of opportunity.

SHIFTING ALIGNMENTS

A second element that can encourage contention is the instability of political alignments. In democratic systems, this is measured most centrally by electoral instability. Especially when they are based on new coalitions, the changing fortunes of government and opposition parties create uncertainty among supporters, encourage challengers to try to exercise marginal power, and may even induce elites to compete for support from outside the polity. The importance of electoral realignments in opening opportunities can be seen in the American Civil Rights movement. Throughout the 1950s, racial "exclusionists" in the Southern wing of the Democratic party were weakened by defections to the Republicans, while the number of Democratic "inclusionists" was growing stronger (Valelly 1993). The decline of the Southern white vote and the move of African American voters to the cities, where Jim Crow was less oppressive, increased the incentive for the Democrats to seek black electoral support. With its razor-thin electoral margin, the Kennedy Administration was forced to move from cautious foot dragging to seizing the initiative for civil rights.

[5] Eisinger's claim was based on more than a Tocquevillian hunch. Operationalizing opportunity structure in American cities through differences in the formal and informal political structures of local government, he studied the behavior of urban protest groups in a sample of fifty-three cities during the turbulent 1960s. He found that the level of activism of these groups was highest not where access was open or closed, but at intermediate levels of political opportunity.

DIVIDED ELITES

Conflicts within and among elites can also encourage outbreaks of contention. Divisions among elites not only provide incentives to resource-poor groups to take the risks of collective action, they encourage portions of the elite that are out of power to seize the role of "tribunes of the people." History provides numerous examples of divided elites bringing resources to emerging movements. Splits within the elite played a key role in the challenges to communism in East Central Europe, especially after Gorbachev warned the Communist states of the region that the Red Army would no longer intervene to defend them. This was seen by wobbling elites as a signal to join the opposition. Splits in the elite were also important in the transitions to democracy in authoritarian Spain and Brazil in the 1970s and 1980s, where the divisions between soft-liners and hard-liners provided openings for opposition movements to exploit (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986: 19; Bermeo 1997). Finally, splits in the elite enabled the success of the Sandinista guerillas in coming to power in Nicaragua (McAdam et al. 2001: Chapter 7).

INFLUENTIAL ALLIES

A fourth aspect of political opportunity is the presence of influential allies. Challengers are encouraged to take collective action when they have allies who can act as friends in court, as guarantors against repression, or as acceptable negotiators on their behalf. As we saw earlier, both through Yeltsin's apparent support for their efforts and through the independent activities of the miners and East European dissidents, challengers in the USSR gained both confidence and models for collective action. William Gamson's book on contention in the United States (1990) provides historical evidence for similar processes in democratic systems.[6] And as we will see in Chapter 12, external actors such as transnational nongovernmental advocacy organizations (NGOs) can sometimes be crucial allies of domestic human rights groups in the global South (Keck and Sikkink 1998).

These mechanisms of opening and closing political opportunity are arrayed differentially in different systems and change over time – often independently, but sometimes in close connection with one another. For example, splits among elites and political realignments can work together to induce disaffected groups to seek support from outsiders. When minority factions of the elite ally with outside challengers, challenges from inside and outside the polity combine in major cycles of contention (see Chapter 10). And these elements of opportunity

[6] William Gamson's research shows a correlation between influential allies and movement success. In the 53 "conflict groups" he studied, the presence or absence of political allies was closely related to whether or not these groups succeeded (1990: 64–66). In studying American Farmworker movements in the 1940s and 1960s, Craig Jenkins and Charles Perrow found a similar contrast: The advantage of the United Farm Workers in the 1960s lay in the presence of external constituencies that their predecessors in the 1940s had lacked (1977).

are malleable and need to be seen in connection with repression and the threat of repression.

Making and Diffusing Opportunities

Contentious collective action demonstrates the possibilities of collective action to others and offers even resource-poor groups opportunities that their lack of internal resources would deny them. This occurs when "early risers" make claims on elites that can be used by "spin-off movements," which have fewer resources (McAdam 1995). Moreover, early risers can expose opponents' points of weakness that may not be evident until they have been challenged. Their actions can also reveal unsuspected or formerly passive allies both within and outside the system. Finally, the efforts of early risers create "master frames" and can pry open institutional barriers through which the demands of other groups can pour.

Once collective action is launched in part of a system on behalf of one type of goal by a particular group, the encounter between that group and its antagonists provides models of collective action, master frames, and mobilizing structures that produce new opportunities. These secondary effects take three general forms: the expansion of a group's own opportunities and those of cognate groups; the dialectic between movements and countermovements; and the unintended creation of opportunities for elites and authorities.

EXPANDING ONE'S OWN OPPORTUNITIES

Challengers are strategic actors, but they are not always strategically astute. Some surge forward without looking to left or right, taking the initial disorganization or unpreparedness of their targets as permanent weakness. Inexperienced protesters often underestimate the reserves of their opponents. But challengers may also be strategically more savvy. William Gamson's research showed that the most successful groups that he studied in American history sought not new advantages but increased access (1990). That access could then become a new and more durable opportunity structure for the same actors. The same was true of the Solidarity activists in Poland in 1980–1981; their insistence on recognition of trade union rights over immediate advantages was aimed at guaranteeing them future opportunities. It may also prove true of the emerging Chinese labor movement, a shift that we saw hints of in Chapter 6.

EXPANDING OTHERS' OPPORTUNITIES

One of the most remarkable characteristics of contentious politics is that it expands opportunities for others. Protesting groups put issues on the agenda with which other people identify and that demonstrate the utility of collective action that others can copy or innovate upon. For example, as we saw in Chapter 7, the American Civil Rights movement expanded the doctrine of rights that became the "master frame" of the 1960s and 1970s (Hamilton 1986).

Collective action embodies claims in dramatic ways that show others the way. This was the case for Latinos and other minority ethnic groups who took advantage of the opportunity structure opened by the efforts of the black-led Civil Rights movement (Browning, Marshall and Tabb 1984). Together, these cognate movements can eventually constitute an alliance system (Kriesi et al., 1995). These others, however, may not be particularly friendly to the groups that expand their opportunities.

MOVEMENTS AND COUNTERMOVEMENTS

Not only does expansion of opportunities affect a movement's "alliance system," a movement that offends influential groups can trigger a countermovement (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). Movements that employ violence invite physical repression. Movements that make extreme forms of policy demand can be outmaneuvered by groups that pose the same claim in more acceptable form. And when a movement's success threatens another group in the context of heightened mobilization, this can lead to outbidding and counterprotest. For example, the spiral of conflict between the American Pro-Choice and Pro-Life movements shows how movements create opportunities for opponents. The access to abortion rights that was decreed by the Supreme Court in the early 1970s galvanized Catholics and fundamentalist Protestants to organize against abortion clinics. This Pro-Life movement became so dynamic that it was a major force in defeating the Equal Rights Amendment (Mansbridge 1986). Eventually, a radical offshoot of Pro-Life called "Operation Rescue" used such radical direct tactics in the early 1990s that it stimulated a countermobilization campaign by the usually legalistic Pro-Choice forces (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996).

MAKING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ELITES AND PARTIES

Finally, protesters create political opportunities for elites – both in a negative sense, when their actions provide grounds for repression, and in a positive one, when opportunistic politicians seize the opportunity created by challengers to proclaim themselves tribunes of the people. Protesters on their own seldom have the power to affect the policy priorities of elites. This is so both because their protests often take an expressive form, and because elites are unlikely to be persuaded to make policy changes that are not in their own interest. Reform is most likely when challenges from outside the polity provide a political incentive for elites within it to advance their own policies and careers. As we will see in Chapter 11, perhaps the most enduring outcome of the French May movement was an educational reform on which the protesters had only minimal impact.

Political opportunism is not a monopoly of left or right, parties of movement or parties of conservation. The conservative Eisenhower Administration responded in essentially the same way to the Civil Rights movement as the liberal Kennedy Administration did – for the simple reason that both were

concerned with electoral realignment and wished to minimize the foreign policy damage of American racism (Piven and Cloward 1977: Chapter 4). The Obama campaign of 2008 took advantage of the more radical peace movement that had arisen in opposition to the Bush Administrations' wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, just as the Republican party took advantage of the anti-incumbent mood of the electorate in 2010 to embrace the surging "Tea Party."

When are parties and interest groups most likely to take advantage of opportunities created by movements? They appear to do so mainly when a system is challenged by a range of movements, and not when individual movement organizations mount challenges that can be easily repressed or isolated. That is to say, reformist outcomes are most likely when political opportunities produce general confrontations among challengers, elites, and authorities, as in the cycles of contention that will be examined in Chapter 10.

DECLINING OPPORTUNITIES

The opening of opportunities provides external resources to people who lack internal resources. It opens gates where there were only walls before, alliances that did not previously seem possible, and realignments that appear capable of bringing new groups to power. But because these opportunities are external – and because they shift so easily from initial challengers to their allies and opponents and, ultimately, to elites and authorities – political opportunities are fickle friends. The result is that openings for reform quickly close or allow new challengers with different aims to march through the gates that the early risers have battered down.

Thus, the 1989 revolutions in Eastern Europe that many thought would bring democracy to a part of the world that had been denied freedom for a half-century produced few working democracies, several neo-Communist states, a number of countries that disintegrated into separatist conflict – like Yugoslavia – and a number of hybrid regimes with representative institutions and an authoritarian core (Beissinger 2002). Even in East Germany, which was rapidly absorbed into a stable Western democracy, the democratic Civic Forum that led the way to unification in 1989 was swept aside by the established political parties, while the successor to the old Communist party remained an electoral force. Movements are evanescent because they influence political changes that can precipitate their own decline.

The shifting nature of political opportunities does not mean that they do not matter for the formation of social movements. Just as Lenin and the Bolsheviks came to power in Russia in 1917 as the result of the opportunity of the First World War, it was the opportunities provided by Gorbachev's reforms that stimulated collective action in the former Soviet Union and in East Central Europe in 1989. But if contention migrates from challengers to their allies, from movements to countermovements, and from outside the polity to elites and parties within it, this occurs not only because of changes in opportunity, but because of changes in the level and character of threat as well.

Suppression and the Threat of Suppression

Before we begin, it will be important to distinguish between physical threats from authorities and more general mechanisms of suppression of dissidence. Some forms of suppression go beyond overt coercion, and some *non*-state actors also have resources to suppress dissent. In what follows, I will limit the term "repression" to mean physical coercion of challengers, and will use the broader term "suppression" to mean the social control of dissidence.[7]

Suppression is a more likely fate for movements that demand fundamental change and threaten elites than for groups that make ameliorative claims (Gamson 1990: Chapter 4). It is also obvious that, although authoritarian regimes suppress social movements, representative ones facilitate them. But several aspects of repressive regimes encourage some forms of contention, and some characteristics of representative regimes take the sting out of movements. We will have much more to say about different types of regime in the final section of this chapter.

The possession of repressive tools by a state does not mean that they will be freely employed. During the period from the 1970s onward, the United States became objectively a far more repressive regime (Soule and Davenport 2009). For example, imprisonment and incarceration rates increased, more money was spent on corrections, police increased the use of deadly force against ordinary citizens, and police forces equipped themselves with paramilitary forces, in part to control public protest. As Sarah Soule and Christian Davenport conclude of the period up to the 1990s, "across a wide variety of indicators, the United States is systematically becoming more aggressive with regard to how citizens are treated by the police" (Soule and Davenport 2009: 2, 5).

Not only that, but since September 11, 2001, the American state has dramatically expanded its apparatus of intelligence and surveillance. For example, two students of constitutional law, Eric Posner and Adrian Vermeule, list eight major areas of Bush administration policies after 2001 that affect the rights of Americans and others:

- Heightened search and surveillance powers
- Ethnicity-based search and surveillance
- Coercive interrogation
- Immigration sweeps and surveillance
- Terrorism and material support statutes
- Military trials
- Military action
- Detention of enemy combatants outside the theatre of hostilities (Posner and Vermeule 2007: pp. 7–9)[8]

[7] Jennifer Earl, to whose work the following section is in debt, prefers the term "protest control" to "suppression," but appears to mean very much what I do by "the social control of protest." See her introduction to the special focus issue of *Mobilization* 11(2006: 129–144) on repression.

[8] Posner and Vermeule excluded censorship from among the Bush policies, but this is correct only if we ignore the extraordinary expansion of the areas of information that the government claimed falls within national security limits.

TABLE 8.1. *A Reduced Typology of Protest Control*[9]

	Coercion	Channeling
State Agents Tightly Connected With National Elites	Military action against protests; FBI counterintelligence	Cutting off funding; tax law on nonprofits
State Agents Loosely Connected With National Elites	Local policing of protest; local police counterintelligence programs	Permitting requirements for protest; financial aid restrictions on students convicted of crimes
Private Agents	Violence by countermovements; private threats made by a countermovement	Elite patronage limited to specific goals or tactics; company towns

Source: Adapted from Jennifer Earl, "Tanks, Tear Gas and Taxes: Toward a Theory of Movement Repression," 2003.

Although a rhetorical rollback of some of these repressive techniques occurred under the Obama Administration, underneath the liberal rhetoric, the American state has normalized most of them (Margulies forthcoming).

The threat to protesters and potential protesters is not limited to the use of overt instruments of repression. Using the term "protest control" rather than "suppression," Jennifer Earl (2003) outlines a typology that distinguishes among twelve different kinds of control, which combine three fundamental dimensions: (1) the identity of the actor engaging in protest control (e.g., state agents closely connected to national elites, (2) state agents loosely connected to them and to non-state actors); and (3) the form of the action (outright coercion versus channeling to encourage or discourage certain types of actions), and whether the actions are covert or overt. Table 8.1 reports Earl's typology but for simplicity excludes the visibility of protest control. Earl's work shows that we cannot reduce the potential or actual threats to protesters to the overt use of police violence against them, as we will see below.

COERCIVE CONTROL

Coercion of protesters (the left hand column of Table 8.1) was the major recourse of most regimes until the 20th century, even in liberal polities such as the United States, where no national police force existed, but where state militias and private detective agencies were often employed to repress strikers. However, direct repression began to lose its sting after World War I, when major expansion of the concept of civil liberties was achieved by the courts (Stone 2004). Thus, although antiwar protesters, radicals, and anarchists were severely repressed during that war, by the 1930s many of the court decisions

[9] This is a reduced version of the typology presented in Earl (2003), which combines her categories of "observed" and "unobserved" forms of protest control.

that condemned them had been reversed (pp. 226-ff.). Posner and Vermeule even see a "libertarian ratchet" in American civil liberties from the 1930s on (pp. 146–149).

The invention of nonviolent resistance helped to neutralize the effectiveness of coercive methods, because nonviolent protesters appeared to welcome incarceration (Sharp 1973). In response to the strategic weapon of nonviolent protest, the police and the courts began to accept as legitimate forms of action that they had previously repressed. Thus, the sit-in, punished almost universally by incarceration when it was first employed, was increasingly accepted in the 1960s as a form of speech. Diffused among progressive and liberal groups in the 1960s, the sit-in even spread to their ideological enemies in the 1980s, as the antiabortion movement gained ground (Staggenborg 1991).

CHANNELING CONTENTION

Perhaps because of the growing ineffectiveness of coercive controls, states have turned to some degree toward what Earl calls "channeling." Though outright repression is more brutal and frightening, evidence indicates that increasing the costs of organization and mobilization is a more effective strategy for reducing contention in the long run (Tilly 1978: 100–102). For example, when Steven Barkan compared Southern cities that used the courts to block civil rights activities versus those that used the police to repress them, he found that the former were able to resist desegregation longer than the latter (1984). Similarly, during the McCarthy Era, American conservatives found it easier to increase the costs of membership in the Communist Party than to ban strikes or demonstrations. More recently, Egyptian authorities have found that an effective way of discouraging the use of the Internet for communication among dissidents is to require patrons who use Internet cafés to register their identity cards at the entrance to the café.[10]

Suppressing the preconditions for collective action is not easy to accomplish and has its own costs. First, financial and administrative costs are associated with generalized channeling. For example, because Egyptian authorities do not know who the potential protesters are, they must make Internet café owners register the ID cards of all patrons, even those who simply want to play computer games. Because the National Security Agency after 9/11 did not know which insurgents were planning to penetrate America's defenses, it monitored all telephone and Internet traffic between the United States and foreign countries, thus breaking American privacy laws (Sidel 2004). And because the Supreme Court claims it cannot distinguish between speech that helps terrorists move toward peaceful contention and that which contributes to violence, in 2010 it supported a provision of the U.S Patriot Act that bans all such "helpful speech" when it is used to tell groups that have been declared terrorist by the government how to participate peacefully (*New York Times*, June 22, 2010).

[10] I am grateful to Joel Beinen for this information.

The second and more subtle cost of channeling is that repressing organizations silences constructive critics, as well as opponents of the regime, and blocks information flow upward. One reason why the Soviet Union disintegrated as quickly as it did after 1989 was that independent organizations that might have signaled minor causes of dissent had been silenced. In such cases, when collective action does break out, it turns from a trickle into a torrent as people learn for the first time that others like themselves oppose the regime (Kuran 1991). The Chinese authorities today tolerate some grassroots protest because local protesters provide information about sources of dissent that allows central authorities to identify the perpetrators of abuse at the local level (O'Brien, ed. 2008).

State toleration for nonviolent contention is a double-edged sword (Meyer and Tarrow 1998). On the one hand, it provides a relatively risk-free means of giving large numbers of people the sense that they are acting meaningfully on behalf of their beliefs. But on the other hand, it deprives organizers of the weapon of outrage. Violent and capricious police who throw sincere young protesters into jail are easier to mobilize against than are reasonable-sounding public authorities who organize seminars for demonstrators and protect their right to free speech (della Porta and Reiter, eds. 1997). If we are entering a "social movement society," overt repression will be far less important than the indirect control of contention.

PROTEST MANAGEMENT OR QUIETER PROTESTERS?

After the 1960s, when American and European courts and authorities began to tolerate new forms of protest, it seemed as if the police had moved systematically toward a strategy of peaceful protest management. During this period, Sarah Soule and Christian Davenport found that "aggressive policing of protest" (defined as police use of force and/or violence) had declined. A slight increase was noted in the early 1980s and again in the early 1990s, but generally, a de-escalation of protest policing occurred (Soule and Davenport 2009: 9).

What was the reason for this change from overt coercion to peaceful protest management? One theory emphasizes a deliberate shift in public policy to recognize the legitimacy of protest (McCarthy and McPhail 1998; della Porta and Reiter, eds. 1997). A second possibility is a change in the degree of "threat": Police may employ coercive tactics only when they are threatened by more aggressive forms of contention, such as organized violence.

Both hypotheses are plausible, but in their systematic analysis of protest and police behavior in the United States between 1960 and 1990, Soule and Davenport found the strongest support for the second one – that the decline in police coercion after the 1960s was the result of a decline in aggressiveness of protesters and an increase in "quieter" forms of action (2009: p. 12 and Table 1). In their view, the de-escalation of police coercion was directly related to the de-radicalization of the repertoire of contention. But such an

inference is also compatible with the first hypothesis, that is, increased state reliance on the "channeling" of protest may have produced both a decline in coercive means and a shift on the part of protesters to quieter forms of contention.

THE EFFECTS OF COERCION ON PROTEST[11]

A question that has produced an enormous outpouring of research involves the effect that protest control has on subsequent mobilizations (see the review in Earl 2006 and Earl and Soule 2010). Some researchers (e.g., DeNardo 1985, Muller and Weede 1990) argued that the use of coercion reduces protest participation by increasing its costs. Others argued that coercive methods have exactly the opposite effect – radicalizing individuals and thus increasing the amount and severity of protests (Opp and Roehl 1990). Still others see curvilinear patterns in the relationship between protest and repression (Lichbach and Gurr 1981, Francisco 1996; 2004), while others see no overall pattern and suspect that these relationships are situationally based and depend on interactions among protesters, opponents, and third parties (Earl and Soule 2010: 76).

The heterogeneity of these findings has led skilled researchers, including Karen Rasler, to conclude that the relationship between protest and repression can be understood only in light of the intergroup dynamics of the political process (1996). Others, including Jennifer Earl (2005) and Earl and Soule (2010), have focused on the effects of specific repressive actions, such as the impact of arrest on the future behavior of protesters and on different forms of police intervention. The most challenging proposal is Tilly's, who suggested that, rather than attempting to uncover general laws about the protest/repression relationship, researchers should focus on alternative causal pathways that involve interaction among protesters, the police, the authorities, and significant others (Tilly 2005; Johnston 2006).

Following Tilly's surmise, we would expect the protester/police relationship to be very different during a phase of radicalization such as the Palestinian Intifada (Alimi 2006, 2009) or the Iranian Revolution (Rasler 1996), then during declining mobilizations, as after the 1960s in the United States (Earl and Soule 2006). Charles Brockett's work on Central America supports just such a temporally differentiated hypothesis (1995). Brockett found that repression was more ferocious when the guerilla movements were weak, and that it let up as the movement gained mass support. We would also expect police behavior to differ greatly between different forms of regime – a broad subject that we turn to now.

[11] This section is much in debt to Jennifer Earl's (2003 and 2006) summaries of the literature on the effects of police control on mobilization, and to her's and Sarah Soule's article, "The Impacts of Repression" (2010).

TABLE 8.2. *State Strength and Prevailing Strategies as Structuring Principles for Contentious Actors*

Prevailing Strategy	State Strength	
	Weak States	Strong States
Exclusive	Formalistic inclusion; strong repression; veto possibility but no substantive change	Full exclusion; strong repression; no possibility of veto or substantive change
Inclusive	Full procedural integration; formal and informal access; weak repression; possibility of veto but no substantive concessions	Informal cooptation; weak repression; no possibility of veto but substantive concessions

Source: Adapted from Hanspeter Kriesi, "The Political Opportunity Structure of New Social Movements: Its Impact on Their Mobilization," p. 177. 1995.

Regimes and Opportunities

Until now, we have focused mainly on changes in the opportunity/threat equation. But more stable aspects of opportunity/threat condition contentious politics. One set of factors revolves around the concepts of "state strength," centralization, and decentralization; a second deals with states' prevailing strategies toward challengers; and a third relates to the overall structure of the regime and the role of protest in regime change.

In his and his collaborators' work on "new" social movements in Western Europe in the 1970s–1980s (1995; Kriesi et al. 1995), Hanspeter Kriesi distinguished between weak and strong states and between two poles of dominant state strategies toward opposition – "exclusive" and "inclusive" strategies. Kriesi's typology is reproduced with some modifications in Table 8.2. Of course, many actual states are found between the poles of strong and weak states and somewhere between inclusive and exclusive strategies. But let us take Kriesi's typology as a heuristic starting point and modify it as we consider some real-world variations.

STATE STRENGTH, CENTRALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION

In its most common form, the argument from state strength would run something like this: Centralized states with effective policy instruments at their command attract collective actors to the summit of the political system, while decentralized states provide a multitude of targets at the base.[12] Strong states

[12] The major published source is Peter Evans, Dietrich Reuschmeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (1985). Also see Richard Valelly's "*The Two Reconstructions: The*

also have greater capacity to implement the policies they choose to support; when these are favorable to challengers' claims, the latter will gravitate toward conventional forms of expression; when they are negative, violence or confrontation ensues.[13] In contrast, it would follow that because weak states allow criticism and invite participation, they can deal with the most challenging elements of popular politics through the institutional political process, as the United States did after the race riots of the 1960s (Lipsky and Olson 1976).

Federalism and local home rule are particular invitations to movements to shift their actions into institutions, because they provide alternative sites for participation (Tarrow 1998a). In her research on the American Temperance movement, Ann-Marie Syzmanski showed how the movement's middle-class women leaders shifted strategically between levels of the federal system, and from proposing constitutional amendments to local organizing (1997). Such strategic flexibility and "venue shopping" are typical of decentralized systems and are less available to movements in more centralized states.

Different degrees of centralization were a major source of the differences that Tocqueville saw between France and the United States. In France, he argued, the centralized *ancien régime* had snuffed out local initiative and associational life, so that when contention broke out in the 1780s, no civil society was available to absorb it, distill it into separate channels, and make reform possible without revolution (Tocqueville 1955). In America, in contrast, decentralization helped local associations and local decision making to flourish (1954). A pluralistic polity made it possible to avoid the "excess of democracy" that the French Revolution had engendered (Tarrow 1998a). Similar contrasts emerged between the French and American student movements that emerged in the 1960s. The first exploded only in early 1968, diffused rapidly, and soon moved rapidly into the political arena, triggering a political convulsion that threatened the Fifth Republic. The second produced a much longer, more decentralized series of protest campaigns at campuses around the country and was diffused into various rivulets of the New Left.

But decentralization is a double-edged sword. Tocqueville did not stay in America long enough to see how federalism would allow the Southern and Northern states to develop along radically different lines – the one slaveholding, the other free – developing conflicts that festered for decades before exploding in a savage civil war. Similarly, although federalism did not cause the collapse of Communism in the former Soviet bloc, it was only the three federal systems – Czechoslovakia, the USSR, and Yugoslavia – that collapsed under the strain; in the third, a civil war broke out (Bunce 1999).

Struggle for Black Enfranchisement. (2004), which compares American state structures and party systems over time.

[13] For example, Herbert Kitschelt traces differences in the environmental movements of France, Germany, Sweden, and the United States to such institutional differences in state structure. See his article, "Political Opportunity Structure and the Political Process" (1986).

PREVAILING STRATEGIES

But when taken alone as a guide to action, the concept of state strength lacks agency. As Table 8.2 suggests, some states – whether strong or weak – have a dominant strategy toward challengers that is inclusive, responding to and absorbing their demands. Prevailing strategies intersect with state strength in interesting ways. In their research on protest events in four European countries, Kriesi and his collaborators found that Switzerland (which they code as a "weak" state with an inclusive state strategy) had a high level of mobilization and a low level of violence and confrontation. At the other extreme, France (which they code as a strong state with an exclusive strategy) was found to have a lower level of routine mobilization and a higher level of confrontational protest (1995: 49).[14]

Of course, "strength" and "weakness" are relational values that vary for different actors, for different levels of the state, and in different historical periods. With respect to different actors, the degree and constancy of repression vary according to the legitimacy of the actor, its social strength, and how its actions are likely to affect other actors. For example, in his detailed analysis of protest and repression in South Korea in 1990 and 1991, Taehyun Nam found that the state was less tolerant to the protest of workers than of students and to mixed-dissident protest, and it was more tolerant to peasants' protests (2006: 431). Similarly, the American state – which would be "inclusive" in Kriesi's overall typology – has usually been quite "exclusive" in the face of attacks on property or from groups suspected of disloyalty. As a result of this difference, the American state presents an open door to groups that advance modest goals – the so-called "consensus movements" studied by McCarthy and Wolfson (1992) – but sets up a barricade against those who are thought to challenge capital or national security.

Similar differences can be found at different levels of the polity. When Ann-Marie Szymanski's temperance activists found the national state too strong to crack in the nineteenth century, they turned to state legislatures and local governments, where they could concentrate their strength more effectively (Szymanski 1997). Does this make the American state "strong" or "weak"? That depends on where it is challenged and on who is challenging it. For example, Peter Eisinger found that urban protest in the 1960s was far more common in "unreformed" mayor-council cities than in reformed council-manager ones (1973).

"Strength" and "weakness" with respect to the control of contention also vary in different historical periods. Neither state strength nor prevailing

[14] Note that Kriesi and his collaborators found a lower level of mobilization for France only in the so-called "new" social movements; traditional class-based movements were more vigorous. These findings are contested by the enormous level of street protests described by Olivier Fillieule in his book *Stratégies de la Rue* (1997), based on close examination of French police files on protests.

strategies are exogenous of political factors, which change as the result of wars, elections, party realignments, and shifts in public opinion. A state that is "strong" in the hands of a unified majority or under a strong leader can easily become "weak" when that majority is divided, or opposition to it grows. And a state that is strong when it enjoys the confidence of business weakens when inflation soars and capital moves abroad. When a new political configuration appears – for example, with the perceived threat to domestic security after 9/11 – the supposedly weak American state turns stronger and is ready to roll back civil rights and civil liberties (Margulies 2006; Sidel 2004; Vitale 2007).

Temporary divisions in the political elite are easy to mistake for a structurally weak state. Thus, from the defeat of the Federalists and the election of Jefferson in 1800 until the Civil War, the regionally divided American elite limited the size of the American state. When that war reduced the South both militarily and politically, the state became much stronger – a "Yankee Leviathan," in Richard Bensel's terms (1991). Conversely, the "strong" French state under General de Gaulle was weakened under his less charismatic and ideologically divided followers after the 1960s, and France became one of the most protest-prone countries in the West (Fillieule and Tartakowsky 2008).

WAR, COERCION, AND CONTENTION

Although the American state may have been "weak" in some absolute sense when Tocqueville studied it in the 1830s, in the train of two World Wars, the Cold War, and the War on Terror, the American state has become a national security state that can hardly be considered "weak." Similarly, the British state, which shares America's tolerance of peaceful dissent, has constructed a dense network of CCTV cameras – 4.2 million of them, or about one for every fourteen people.[15]

Wars ratchet up the coercion of dissatisfied minorities and those who oppose the decision to go to war. From the opposition to the Alien and Sedition acts in the 1790s, to the jailing of Americans unwilling to serve in the Civil War, to the persecution of pacifists and radicals who opposed entry into World War I, to the internment of Japanese-American in camps in World War II, to the oppression of Communists and "fellow travelers" in the Cold War, wars and "quasi-wars" have strengthened the American state and ratcheted up coercion of minorities and opponents. As Elizabeth Kier and Ronald R. Krebs write: "Democracies often compromise their principles during crises: Executive authority grows, rights of due process are set aside, and freedom of expression suffers" (2010: 1).

Yet a contrarian view suggests the following: The long-term effect of war making for democratic regimes may actually be positive. In his historical analysis of war and state building, Charles Tilly argued that the requisites of war making obliged rulers to build stronger states, collect taxes, conscript soldiers,

[15] See http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/6108496.stm. Accessed March 19, 2010.

and expand the reach of the state (Tilly 1990). To gain consent for war and inspire citizens to support war-making efforts, rulers extended rights, expanded protection, and ultimately created the modern welfare state. War, Tilly maintained, created the conditions for "white-hot bargaining" between citizens and their states. In the twentieth century, war gave a push to women's suffrage, to the GI Bill of Rights, to votes for 18-year-olds, and to the expansion of modern civil societies. Though the short-term effect of war is often repressive, the indirect effect of war may reinforce the capacity of citizens to make claims on the state.

Regimes, Opportunities, and Threats

Strength and weakness, prevailing strategies toward protest, historical and spatial differences, and war and citizenship come together in the concept of regime. Tilly (2006: 19) classifies regimes along two main axes:

- *Governmental capacity*: the degree to which governmental actions affect distributions of populations, activities and resources within the government's jurisdiction, relative to some standard of quality and efficiency
- *Democracy:* the extent to which persons subject to the government's authority have broad, equal rights to influence governmental affairs and to receive protection from arbitrary governmental action (p. 21)

High-capacity democratic regimes produce an enormous concentration of social movements. This is obvious when we recall that social movements depend on regime-backed rights, notably rights of association, assembly, and speech (Tilly, p. 188). Low-capacity regimes exert significant control over contention close to their operating bases – especially in the capital – "but intervene in contention much less vigorously, effectively, and continuously outside of that zone" (p. 211). High-capacity undemocratic regimes throttle the development of independent civil society organizations and repress dissent and, as a result, produce few and mainly unsustained social movements. Lacking regime-backed rights, they tilt away from channeling and toward the coercion of contention. Lacking the sensitivity to the buildup to consent that comes from a highly developed political society, when contention appears, it erupts violently.

CONCLUSIONS

This typology, as Tilly would have been the first to admit, is largely static. It is also unidirectional, predicting forms and levels of contention from stable aspects of regimes. And it assumes that the state is a natural unit isolated from global and transnational trends. What we need to do next is begin to look at the dynamic relations between social movements, political contention, and regimes, and at the embedding of national patterns of contention in world politics. This we will attempt to do in Part III. In Chapter 9, I will return to the

general issues raised in Chapter 1 regarding the relational nature of contention. In Chapter 10, employing this approach, I will turn to the cyclical patterns of the rise and fall of contention in different types of regimes. In Chapter 11, I will examine the impact of contention on regimes, policies and citizen politics. And in Chapter 12, I will turn to the transnational embedding of contentious politics.

PART III

DYNAMICS OF CONTENTION