

Social Movements, Contentious Politics, and Democracy

MA course, Political Science Department, AY 2019-20, Winter Semester, 4 credits

Instructor: Professor Béla Greskovits

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Classes: Wednesdays and Fridays 13.30-15.10pm.

Classroom: tba.

Office hours: Wednesdays 11.00-13.00pm, or by appointment in Nádor 9, room FT 305.

Course outline

The course introduces participants into the study of contentious politics and social movements in various historical periods and distinct parts of the world. With Barrington Moore, we ask: “why people so often put up with being the victims of their societies and why at other times they become very angry and try with passion and forcefulness to do something about their situation.” (*Injustice. The Social Bases of Obedience and Revolt*. New York: M. E. Sharpe 1978: xiii.)

The first part of the course covers theories and historical examples, which help to better understand how power relations, political opportunities and risks, availability of allies, utilization of organizational resources, and ideas on the purpose of contentious claims shape peoples’ choices between obedience and revolt.

The second part focuses on the impact of long-term processes and factors – such as changing values and conflicts between generations and the passing of popular involvement in democracy - as well as new challenges - such as the global financial crisis and Great Recession and climate change – lead to the emergence of various social movements, and new relationships between social movements and political parties. The examples reflect the experience of nascent and mature democracies, as well as authoritarian regimes in various parts of the world. In all these cases we shall also investigate the consequences of social movements and social contention for the quality and prospects of democracy and democratization, respectively.

Learning outcomes

The course improves students’ analytic skills required for future careers, whether in academia or policy making, through facilitating:

- a) in-class discussion and debate;
- b) critical thinking about the views expressed in the literature;
- c) and experience in making comparisons across concepts and cases.

Requirements and grading

Presence and active participation in in-class discussions / absence only in case of illness substantiated by medical documents. (15% of final grade)

1 short presentation (15 minutes). The presentation will tackle a concrete example of social movement and/or contentious political event chosen by the author. The presentation is expected to give a short overview over the event, justify why it is important, explain what is its relationship to readings of the course, and raise one related problem or question the author wants to discuss with the participants of the course. In case of shared interest, course participants are encouraged to form small teams of two or three, and present various aspects of the same theme jointly (15% of final grade).

One in-class closed book mid-term exam (60 minutes). The exam will test familiarity with the key terms and concepts covered by the readings during the weeks 1 to 6. (35% of final grade)

One in-class closed book final exam (60 minutes). The exam will test familiarity with the key terms and concepts covered by the readings during the weeks 7 to 11. (35% of final grade)

Topics and required readings

Part I: Powers in Movement. Theoretical and Historical Perspectives

Week 1

Class 1: Introduction: course content and requirements

Class 2: Overview of social movement research

Required reading:

Tarrow, S. (2011) *Power in Movement. Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1: Contentious Politics and Social Movements, pp. 16-34.

Week 2

Class 1: Social capital and social movements

Required reading:

Tarrow, S. (2011) *Power in Movement*. Chapter 6: Networks and Organizations, pp. 119-139.

Class 2: “Good” and “bad” civil society?

Required reading:

Riley, D. (2005) „Civic Associations and Authoritarian Regimes in Interwar Europe: Italy and Spain in Comparative Perspective.” *American Sociological Review* 70 (April), pp. 288-310.

Della Porta, D. (2005) "Multiple Belongings, Flexible Identities, and the Construction of 'Another Politics': Between the European Social Forum and Local Social Fora." In *Transnational Protest and Global Activism*, pp. 175- 202.

Week 3

Class 1: Ideas and contentious claims

Required reading:

Tarrow, S. (2011) *Power in Movement*. Chapter 7: Making Meanings, pp. 140-156.

Class 2: Framing labor demands in different varieties of capitalism

Required reading:

Gentile, A. and Tarrow, S. (2009) „Charles Tilly, Globalization and Labour’s Citizen’s Rights.” *European Political Science Review* 1 (3), pp. 465-493.

Week 4

Class 1: Political opportunity and social movement agency

Required reading:

Tarrow, S. (2011) *Power in Movement*. Chapter 8: Threats, Opportunities, and Regimes, pp. 157-180.

Class 2: Challenging authoritarian rulers

Required reading:

Bunce, V. and Wolchik, S. (2010) “Defeating Dictators: Electoral Change and Stability in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes.” *World Politics* 62 (1), pp. 43-86.

Brownlee, J., Masoud, T. and Reynolds, A. (2013) “Tracking the ‘Arab Spring’: Why the Modest Harvest?” *Journal of Democracy* 24 (4), pp. 29-44.

Week 5

Class 1: The transnationalization of protest

Required reading:

Tarrow, S. (2011) *Power in Movement*. Chapter 12: Transnational Contention, pp. 134-258.

Class 2: Global justice, and remaking Europe

Required reading:

Kolb, F. (2005) "The Impact of Transnational Protest on Social Movement Organizations: Mass Media and the Making of Attac Germany." In Della Porta, D. and Tarrow, S., eds., *Transnational Protest and Global Activism*. Lanham, Boulder: Rowman and Littlefield, pp. 95-120.

Della Porta, D. (2019). "Europeanisation from Below: Still Time for Another Europe?" *Social Europe*, July 10. <https://www.socialeurope.eu/europeanisation-from-below>

Scherrer, P. (2019). "Rethinking Europe – A Challenge for Trade Unions" *Social Europe*, May 16. <https://www.socialeurope.eu/rethinking-europe-trade-unions>

Week 6

Part II: Changing values, globalization, crisis, and their impact on movements

Class 1: The "silent revolution" and its offspring in post-WWII Western societies

Required reading:

Inglehart, R. (2008) "Changing Values Among Western Publics from 1970 to 2006." *West European Politics* 31 (1-2): pp. 130-146.

Kriesi, H. (1997) "Movements of the Left, Movements of the Right: Putting the Mobilization of Two New Types of Social Movements into Political Context." In Kitschelt, H., Lange, P., Marks, G. and Stephens J. D., eds., *Continuity and Change in Contemporary Capitalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 398-423.

Class 2: MIDTERM EXAM

Week 7

Class 1: The double movement logic

Required reading:

Polanyi, K. (1957/1944). *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1957(1944): 130-162.

Class 2: The triple movement logic

Required reading:

Fraser, N. (2014). „Can Society be Commodities All the Way Down? Post-Polanyian Reflections on Capitalist Crisis.” *Economy and Society* 43. 4: pp. 541-558.

Week 8

Class 1: The hollowing of democracy and its consequences for movements and parties

Required readings:

Mair, P. (2006). “Ruling the Void? The Hollowing of Western Democracy.” *New Left Review* 42 (November-December), pp. 25-51.

Mair, P. (2009). „Representative versus Responsible Government.” Köln: MPIfG Working Paper 09/9.

Class 2: Economic crisis, cultural backlash, and the double attack on liberalism: Role of less-educated workers

Required readings:

Inglehart, R. and Norris, P. (2017). “Trump and the Populist Authoritarian Parties. *The Silent Revolution in Reverse.*” *Perspectives on Politics* 15. 2: 443-454.

Week 9

Class 1: Economic crisis, cultural backlash, and the double attack on liberalism: Role of the precariat

Required readings:

Della Porta, D. (2017). “Political Economy and Social Movement Studies: The Class Basis of Anti-austerity Protests.” *Anthropological Theory*, Vol. 17. 4: 453-473.

Della Porta, D. (2019). “Conceptualizing backlash” *Eurozine*, June 27.

Class 2: Economic crisis, cultural backlash, and the double attack on liberalism: Role of social conservative middle class

Required readings:

Williamson, V., Skocpol, T. and Coggin, G. (2011). “The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism.” *Perspectives on Politics* 9. 1: 25-43.

Greskovits, B. (2017). Rebuilding the Hungarian Right through Civil Organization and Contention. EUI-RSCAS Working Paper 2017/37.

Week 10

Class 1: Civil society and contentious politics in non-Western democracies

Required readings:

Kim, S. (2012) “‘Contentious Democracy’ in South Korea. An Active Civil Society and Ineffectual Political Parties.” *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 8 (2), pp. 51-61.

Ruparelia, S. (2019) “Modi’s Saffron Democracy” *Dissent*. Spring 2019.
<https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/modis-saffron-democracy>

Class 2: Civil society and contentious politics in non-Western autocracies

Required readings:

Perry, E. (2012) „The Illiberal Challenge of Authoritarian China.” *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 8 (2), pp. 3-24.

Beissinger, M. R. (2012) „Russian Civil Societies: Conventional and Virtual.” *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 8 (2), pp. 91-104.

Week 11

Class 1: Countermovements left/right

Required readings:

Roth, S. (2018) „Introduction: Contemporary countermovements in the age of Brexit and Trump” *Sociological Research Online* 23(2): 496-506.

Class 2: Climate change and mobilization

Required readings:

Wahlström, M., Kocyba, P., De Vydt, M., and De Moor, J. eds. (2019). *Protest for a future: Composition, mobilization and motives of the participants in Fridays For Future climate protests on 15 March 2019 in 13 European cities*” Retrieved from:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334172944_Germany_In_Wahlstrom_Mattias_Kocyba_Piotr_De_Vydt_Michiël_and_De_Moor_Joost_Eds_Protest_for_a_future_Composition_mobilization_and_motives_of_the_participants_in_Fridays_For_Future_climate_protests_on

Week 12

Class 1: Wrapping up

Class 2: FINAL EXAM