

APPENDIX A

CONCEPTS AND METHODS

Box A.1 identifies the book's main descriptive concepts: governments, political actors, political identities, contentious performances, and more. The concepts in box A.1 supply the major terms we use when describing different varieties of contention. Our comparison of British antislavery with Ukraine's Orange Revolution in chapter 1 made it obvious that political actors, political identities, performances, and other aspects of contention vary dramatically from one time and place to another. The concepts specify what sorts of variation and change we have to explain.

As chapters 6 and 7 show, for example, social movements occur mainly in very different circumstances from lethal ethnic and religious conflicts, civil wars, and revolutions. That sets our explanatory problem: What sorts of circumstances favor social movements rather than large-scale lethal conflicts, how, and why? What causes connect contentious episodes with the settings in which they occur? In order to answer that sort of question, we must go on from descriptive to explanatory concepts.

Box A.2 identifies the main explanatory concepts the book employs: sites, conditions, streams, events, and episodes of contention, and so on. We use these terms to identify causal connections among the descriptive elements—for example, by showing which mechanisms bring political actors into social movements. As they differentiate between social movements and large-scale lethal conflicts, chapters 6 and 7 lay out how very different regimes and political opportunity structures underlie the two broad classes of contention. Let us review our major explanatory concepts one by one.

Sites of contention include all human settings that serve as originators, objects, and/or arenas of collective claims. Sites may be human individuals, but they also include informal networks, organizations, neighborhoods, professions, trades, and other settings of social life. Each kind of site has its own peculiarities. Neighborhoods do not behave just like individuals; factories and agricultural communities do not behave like neighborhoods.

Box A.1. Major Descriptive Concepts in the Study of Contentious Politics

- *Government*: within a given territory, an organization controlling the principal concentrated means of coercion and exercising priority over all other organizations within the same territory in some regards. In England of 1785, the organization included a king, ministers, civil servants, Parliament, and a network of appointed agents throughout the country.
- *Political actors*: recognizable sets of people who carry on collective action in which governments are directly or indirectly involved, making and/or receiving contentious claims. In Ukraine, supporters of outgoing president Kuchma, backers of presidential candidate Yushchenko, Interior Ministry troops, and external sponsors on both sides all figured as weighty political actors.
- *Political identities*: as applied to political actors, organized answers to the questions “Who are you?” “Who are they?” and “Who are we?” In late eighteenth-century England, some of those answers included Abolitionists, slaveholders, and Parliament.
- *Contentious politics*: interactions in which actors make claims that bear on someone else’s interests, leading to coordinating efforts on behalf of shared interests or programs, in which governments are as targets, the objects of claims, or third parties.
- *Contentious performances*: relatively familiar and standardized ways in which one set of political actors makes collective claims on some other set of political actors. Among other performances, participants in Ukraine’s Orange Revolution used mass demonstrations as visible, effective performances.
- *Contentious repertoires*: arrays of contentious performances that are currently known and available within some set of political actors. England’s antislavery activists helped to invent the demonstration as a political performance, but they also drew on petitions, lobbying, press releases, public meetings, and a number of other performances.
- *Institutions*: within any particular regime, established, organized, widely recognized routines, connections, and forms of organization employed repeatedly in producing collective action. Eighteenth-century antislavery activists could work with such available institutions as religious congregations, parliamentary hearings, and the press.
- *Social movements*: sustained campaigns of claim making, using repeated performances that advertise that claim, based on organizations, networks, traditions, and solidarities that sustain these activities.

These divide into the following:

- *Social movement campaigns*: sustained challenges to power holders in the name of a population living under the jurisdiction of those power holders by means of public displays of that population’s worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment.
- *Social movement bases*: the social background, organizational resources, and cultural framework of contention and collective action.

Box A.2. Major Explanatory Concepts in Contentious Politics

- *Sites of contention*: human settings that serve as originators, objects, and/or arenas of contentious politics. Example: Armies often play all three parts in contention.
- *Conditions*: characteristics of sites and relations among sites that shape the contention occurring in and across them. *Initial* conditions are those that prevail in affected sites at the start of some process or episode. Example: In Italy of 1966, an array of political organizations and existing connections among them provided the background for the cycle of conflict that occurred over the next seven years.
- *Streams of contention*: sequences of collective claim at or across those sites singled out for explanation. Example: a series of strikes by workers in a given industry against their firm(s).
- *Outcomes*: changes in conditions at or across the sites that are plausibly related to the contention under study, including transformations of political actors or relations among them. Example: During or after a series of strikes, management fires workers, changes work rules, and/or raises wages.
- *Regimes*: regular relations among governments, established political actors, challengers, and outside political actors including other governments; eighteenth-century England and twenty-first-century Ukraine obviously hosted very different regimes.
- *Political opportunity structure*: features of regimes and institutions (e.g., splits in the ruling class) that facilitate or inhibit a political actor's collective action; in the case of Ukraine 2004–2005, a divided international environment gave dissidents an opportunity to call on foreign backers in the name of democracy.
- *Mechanisms*: events that produce the same immediate effects over a wide range of circumstances. Example: Diffusion of tactics from one site to another often occurs during major mobilizations, thus altering action at origin and destination as well as facilitating coordination among the affected sites.
- *Processes*: combinations and sequences of mechanisms that produce some specified outcome. Example: Major mobilizations usually combine brokerage and diffusion with other mechanisms in sequences and combinations that strongly affect the collective action emerging from the mobilization.
- *Episodes*: bounded sequences of continuous interaction, usually produced by an investigator's chopping up longer streams of contention into segments for purposes of systematic observation, comparison, and explanation. Example: We might compare successive petition drives of antislavery activists in Great Britain (each drive counting as a single episode) over the twenty years after 1785, thus not only seeing how participants in one drive learned from the previous drive but also documenting how the movement as a whole evolved.

Yet this book has identified many parallels in the ways that mechanisms, processes, and episodes operate across different kinds of sites. We learn, for example, that repertoires can belong to sets of organizations as well as to sets of informal networks and to sets of individuals.

Conditions are characteristics of sites and relations among sites that shape the contention that occurs in and across them. We might imagine a country, for example, in which one group is a well-established political actor with strong ties to government, while another is an underground opponent of the government currently being harassed by state security forces. The existence of those two groups and of their relations to the government identifies a condition that affects contentious politics within the regime in question.

When looking at mechanisms, processes, and episodes, we have often called attention to *initial* conditions that affect how mechanisms interact, how processes develop, and what outcomes result from those processes. Initial conditions prevail when the stream of contention on which we are concentrating begins. Initial conditions such as the available repertoire of claim-making performances or the organization of the country's government affect how contention actually occurs. Conditions then change during and after contention, as struggle itself alters repertoires, relations among political actors, and other features of the sites.

Streams of contention contain connected moments of collective claim making that observers single out for explanation. We might, for example, treat the entire British antislavery movement from 1785 to 1835 as a single stream on the assumption that throughout the period, earlier mobilizations and their consequences shaped later mobilizations. But we could also focus on antislavery efforts in London alone or on just one intense period of action. A stream may come into view because participants or other analysts already treat it as continuous, as in the mobilization that led to the British parliament's banning of the slave trade in 1807. It may also interest us because of concern with some general process such as democratization. Analysts often line up parallel streams of events that do and don't end up with democratic institutions in order to clarify explanations of democratization in general.

Outcomes consist of changes in conditions at or across the sites under study that are plausibly related to the contention under study, including transformations of political actors or relations among them. In transitions from authoritarian to democratic regimes, previously dominant classes, factions, organizations, or families always lose some of their power. If we ask what happens to former rulers under democratic transitions, we are

asking outcome questions. It may turn out that the outcomes we single out did *not* result from the streams of contention we initially observed. In that case, we look for new explanations elsewhere. Part of the adventure comes from determining what actually caused the outcomes in question. For that purpose, we look closely at mechanisms and processes.

Regimes involve regular relations among governments, established political actors, challengers, and outside political actors, including other governments. To identify a regime, we typically begin by locating a *government*: the organization in a given substantial territory that controls the largest concentrated means of coercion—armies, jails, means of shaming people, and so on—within the territory. We then look for political actors outside that government that interact regularly with the government’s agents and agencies. We call the actors *members* if they have secure standing in day-to-day politics, *challengers* if they make their presence known collectively but lack secure standing, and *outsiders* if they operate from bases external to the territory under the government’s control.

Political opportunity structure figures repeatedly in this book’s explanations of contention. Political opportunity structure includes six properties of a regime:

1. The multiplicity of independent centers of power within it
2. Its openness to new actors
3. The instability of current political alignments
4. The availability of influential allies or supporters for challengers
5. The extent to which the regime represses or facilitates collective claim making
6. Decisive changes in items 1 to 5

From the perspective of a whole regime, the instability of alignments and the availability of allies (items 3 and 4) amount to the same thing. Stable alignments generally mean that many political actors have no potential allies in power. By such a definition, however, political opportunity structure varies somewhat from one actor to another. At the same moment, one actor has many available allies; another, few. For all actors, in any case, threats and opportunities shift with fragmentation or concentration of power, changes in the regime’s openness, instability of political alignments, and the availability of allies.

Mechanisms are events that produce the same immediate effects over a wide range of circumstances. The mechanism we call *brokerage*, for example, operates in essentially the same way in highly varied situations.

It connects two previously unconnected social sites and thereby lowers the cost of communication and coordination between them. Social movement organizers often employ brokerage, bringing previously unconnected groups or social networks into the same campaign. Contentious politics also frequently involves the mechanism of *identity shift*, as people who formerly thought of themselves in a variety of distinct social roles come together and realize a unified—if temporary—identity such as worker, victim of environmental pollution, African American, or citizen of the world.

Processes assemble mechanisms into different sequences and combinations, thus producing larger-scale outcomes than any single mechanism. This book deals repeatedly with the process called *mobilization*, in which the resources available to a political actor for collective claim making increase. Relevant resources include energy, ideas, practices, and material objects, to the extent that their application would support the making of claims. Brokerage often plays a part in mobilization, but so does identity shift. In fact, brokerage frequently activates identity shift, as people mobilized around the same issue attribute similarity to themselves and their allies.

Mobilization has an equal and opposite process, *demobilization*, or the decline in the resources available for collective claim making. Beyond open contention, political organizers spend a good deal of their effort on mobilization and on fending off demobilization. Governments, too, direct considerable attention to aiding the mobilization of their supporters and to pursuing the demobilization of their enemies. Government forces' massacre of unarmed peasants of Panzós, Guatemala, only aimed in part at the protesters in the plaza; it also aimed at the demobilization of a swelling peasant movement.

Episodes are bounded sequences of contentious interaction. Mapping streams of contention into episodes aids the detection of mechanisms and processes. This appendix shows how to divide complicated streams of contention into episodes, describe those episodes, decompose them into causes, and then reassemble the causes into causal accounts of episodes, of the larger streams of contention to which those episodes belong, and of processes that recur widely in different sorts of contentious politics. A successful circuit from description to decomposition to reassembly leads back to new circuits; improved explanation of one episode, series of episodes, or class of contention offers a starting point for new explanations concerning similar varieties of contention. We call this the *mechanism-process approach* to explaining contentious politics. Box A.3 sums up the steps we take toward explanation in the mechanism-process approach.

**Box A.3. Steps in the Mechanism-Process
Approach to Explanation of Contention**

1. Using the major descriptive concepts in table A.1 (political actors, political identities, institutions, etc.), specify the *site(s)* of contention you are studying.
2. Using the same descriptive concepts, describe relevant *conditions* at those sites when the contention you are studying begins.
3. Identify and describe the *stream(s) of contention* at or among those sites you want to explain.
4. Specify the outcome(s) whose relation to the contention under study you want to determine.
5. Break the streams of contention into coherent *episodes*.
6. Search the episodes for *mechanisms* producing significant changes and/or differences.
7. Reconstruct the *processes* into which those mechanisms compound.
8. Using analogies or comparisons with similar processes elsewhere, combine conditions, mechanisms, and processes into explanations of specified outcomes.

The eight steps of explanation combine the major descriptive concepts of box A.1 with the major explanatory concepts of box A.2. As we have shown, some investigations call for a different order among the steps. If, for instance, you have a promising account of how a certain process works or how a specific initial condition affects such a process, you will start with a theory about the process and then identify streams of contention that will help to verify or falsify the theory. (We have often used this reverse order of explanation in various chapters.) Sooner or later, however, you will ordinarily go through all eight steps on the way to a new, falsified, modified, or better-verified explanation. Interactions among mechanisms, processes, and initial conditions will constitute your explanations.

We can distinguish four variants of mechanism-process explanations, which we might call common process, local process, process generalization, and site comparison.

Common process accounts identify similar streams of contention and ask whether recurrence of a given process helps to explain the similarity among those streams.

Local process accounts take processes whose operation analysts have already established in other settings and apply them to particular in-

stances—often combining more than one well-documented process for a more complete explanation.

Process generalization accounts concentrate on the process itself, asking in general how it arises and what effects it produces under different conditions.

Site comparison seeks to identify significant differences in the frequency, origin, or consequences of certain processes across different kinds of sites.

Following one of these four models, you could adopt a much more systematic procedure than simply browsing Web newswires for the day's contentious events. You could, for instance, do any of these projects:

- Single out a particular form or issue of contentious politics (e.g., suicide bombing or attacks on local officials) for description and explanation, starting with a map of where such events occur most frequently, but moving on to see whether similar processes occur at all the locations, and whether distinctive characteristics of the locales affect how and when this variety of contentious politics occurs. In this case, you might be doing a *common process* study identifying similarities across sites, like those in which Berman and Laitin studied suicide bombing.
- Take an established model of some process in contentious politics (e.g., the simple model of diffusion and brokerage presented in chapter 2), find a series of episodes within the same locale in which that process is occurring, and investigate whether it occurs in accordance with the model. You would be performing a *local process* analysis.
- Even more ambitiously, develop your own model of some contentious process such as mobilization or demobilization, and test it against a variety of relevant episodes. You would be—fanfare, please!—doing your own version of *process generalization*.
- Following Kriesi and his collaborators, you could compare a smaller number of countries (in Latin America, e.g., Colombia, Peru, and Chile) to determine whether other features of those countries such as their political institutions, the place of indigenous people, or involvement in the drug trade help to explain similarities and differences in their contentious politics. You would be conducting a *site comparison* parallel to theirs.

For any of these projects, you would need more information on contention's social and political context than you would find in daily newswire

reports. For that information, you might turn to standard reference books such as atlases, encyclopedias, U.S. government country reports, political yearbooks, or the countries' own Web sites. You might also want more evidence on individual events. In that case, you might zoom in on national periodicals from the countries that interest you, which are often available online. No matter how and where you assembled your sources, you would be following the steps of box A.3: describing the sites of contention under study, describing conditions at those sites, and so on, through the mechanism-process routine. You would be identifying important streams of contention, dividing them into episodes, looking for recurrent processes within the episodes, and trying to find the crucial mechanisms within those processes: brokerage, diffusion, emulation, and others.

For other analytical purposes, you could also assemble catalogs of episodes at very different scales from Beissinger, Brockett, Kriesi and his collaborators, Rucht, Soule, Tarrow, Tilly, and others. Drawing on North American newspapers, you could close in on a particular issue or form of action—for example, college campus public meetings on freedom of speech or military service. Comparisons among colleges, cities, states, or provinces coupled with background information about the colleges, cities, states, or provinces would then allow you to start an explanation of the character and relative frequency of those meetings. You could also compare much larger events, including revolutions, military coups, civil wars, or strike waves, across multiple regimes and many years. Box A.3 would still give you guidance for organizing your investigation.

One of the book's many applications of box A.3's procedures occurred in chapter 3. There we looked closely at Venezuelan contention between 1980 and the early twenty-first century. Drawing on Venezuelan researchers' excellent work, we went through these steps:

1. Using the major descriptive concepts from chapter 1 (political actors, political identities, contentious performances, etc.), we specified the *sites* of contention we were studying. López Maya and collaborators divided their attention among three sites: Venezuela as a whole, the population of the Caracas metropolitan area, and the five groups of participants for which they conducted special studies.
2. Using the same descriptive concepts, we briefly described relevant *conditions* at those sites when the contention we were studying began. Supplementing the López Maya account with other historical sources, we sketched the background of Venezuelan contention from the 1980s onward.

3. We identified and described the *stream(s) of contention* at or among those sites we wanted to explain. The Venezuelan researchers identified two streams: the longer run fluctuations of contention in the whole country from 1983 to 1999, and the collective dissent of Caracas's population in 1999.
4. We then tried to specify the outcomes whose relation to the contention under study we wanted to determine. We followed two different outcomes: changing relations between Venezuelan citizens and their regime, and alterations in the regime itself as a result of popular contention.
5. Following the Venezuelan team, we broke the streams of contention into coherent *episodes*, dividing both streams into particular episodes, which the Venezuelan research group called "protests."
6. We searched the episodes for *mechanisms* producing significant changes and/or differences. Here (as we have not shown) the Venezuelan researchers emphasize cognitive mechanisms, especially framing, by which popular understandings of what major actors were doing changed. We have instead combed their accounts for evidence of brokerage and diffusion.
7. We went one step further, reconstructing the *processes* into which those mechanisms compounded. We called attention to the simple process of new coordination. But the story as a whole also involves several other important processes: polarization, democratization, dedemocratization, mobilization, and demobilization. A full analysis of Venezuelan contention from 1983 to 1999 would connect all of these crucial processes.
8. Following López Maya and her collaborators, we presented our analysis of Venezuelan contention primarily in a *local process* mode: taking established models of processes in contentious politics, finding a series of episodes within the same locale in which those processes are occurring, and investigating whether they occur in accordance with the model. Certainly our sketch of Venezuelan contentious politics falls short of a definitive test. Yet it establishes the possibility of assembling solid evidence that bears on the validity of available process models.