

Charles Tilly and the Practice of  
Contentious Politics

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*Author's note:* Charles Tilly passed away after a long illness on April 29, 2008. I dedicate this essay to Chuck, with my regret that he cannot – as he did for over twenty years – offer his typically trenchant but sympathetic criticisms. I am grateful to Donatella della Porta, Brian Doherty, Jack Goldstone, Mike Hanagan, Andreas Koller, Hanspeter Kriesi, David S. Meyer, Bill Sewell, Mark Steinberg, Wayne te Brake, Lesley Wood and to Tilly's former Michigan colleagues, Bill Gamson and Mayer N. Zald, for their kind but stimulating comments on this paper.

Charles Tilly began his last book, *Contentious Performances* (2008a; henceforth *CP*) in this way:

Looking at the history of popular contention in France from the 17th to the 20th centuries, I couldn't help noticing two related anomalies. First, although ordinary people found vigorously vital ways of making their voices heard in the midst of repressive regimes, they clung to the same few forms of collective expression and modified those forms only slowly....Second, ordinary people never engaged in a wide variety of technically feasible ways of making collective claims that ordinary people elsewhere and in other times had readily employed..... It occurred to me that in general participants in uprisings and local struggles followed available scripts, adapted those scripts, but only changed them bit by bit. A metaphor came readily to mind: like troupes of street musicians, those French people drew their claim-making performances from standardized, limited repertoires (*CP*:xi).

Tilly first put forward that idea in 1977. He then tried it out in comparing American and British forms of contention between 1750 and 1830 (1979). To his surprise and delight, it caught on, and analysts of contention began using the notion of the repertoire widely. But then, he continues, with typically wry humor:

I began to recognize the drawbacks of success....Although I was reasonably confident that it described my evidence well, I meant the term "repertoire" to present a provocative hypothesis for other analysts of contention to test on their own systematic catalogs.... But by and large analysts of popular struggles ...simply adopted the term to signal the repetitive character of claim making without thinking through what evidence would confirm or deny that repertoires actually facilitated and channelled claim making in the manner of theatrical scripts and standard jazz tunes (*CP*:xii).

Despite repeated calls for empirical verification, modification, or falsification of his idea (Tilly 1993), no one, Tilly complained, responded with evidence about repertoires so he reluctantly decided he would have to undertake the task himself.

An enormous interim effort was his *Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758-1834* (1995), a book that sketched the main lines of his findings but framed them in a narrative mode. He also drew heavily on the repertoire idea in *Regimes and Repertoires* (2007), and insisted on the concept's inclusion in books and articles he wrote with Doug McAdam and this author, *Dynamics of Contention* (2001; 2008). But it is only in his posthumously-published *Contentious Performances* that the idea of the repertoire gains sustained empirical application. That book is, as he

writes, "an extended effort to explicate, verify, and refine the twinned concepts of performance and repertoire" (CP:xii). I consider it the culmination of Tilly's forty-year development of the study of contentious politics.

Tilly began to study contentious politics in France in the late 1950s, an effort that produced his first book, *The Vendée* (1964). But the term "repertoire" did not appear in that book. Why did it take him so long to get to this key concept and, once he had coined it, to write a book about it? I think there were three main reasons:

First, Tilly was famously easily distracted. While many of us are waylaid from major projects to write an article or two, in Tilly's case, the distraction usually turned into a book. Or two. Or three...

And then, he had to shed some holdovers of his work from the 1960s and 1970s – especially what I will call the "structuralist persuasion" he inherited from his great teacher, Barrington Moore Jr. This was eventually replaced with the view that the history of contention can best be seen as the intersection of dynamic mechanisms and processes (2001), what he called "relational realism." That ontological shift took time to evolve.

Third, he needed to develop the tools adequate to the task of collecting, enumerating and analyzing the vast amounts of data needed to study the internal structures of repertoires and their changes over time. Sample surveys of activists would not do the job; neither would the foreshortened studies of "protest events" that this author and others were carrying out at the time: what Tilly thought he needed to track the consistency and the dynamics of repertoires of contention was *the systematic qualitative analysis of extended time series of contentious events* (McAdam, et al. 2008). That took time to develop.

This review does not pretend to be a resumé of Tilly's long and glorious career. That would take us too deeply into the many fields he worked in.<sup>1</sup> My goal is more modest but still exacting: I hope to demonstrate three things about Tilly's contribution to the field of contentious politics: first, how his discovery of the repertoire was bound up with his shift from what he called the "old structuralism" to "relational realism" (2008b); second, how that shift led him to develop a new way of looking at historical events and to fashion a new set of tools to do so; and, third, that Tilly's discoveries challenge historians, sociologists and political scientists to integrate more fully the study of contentious politics with the study of political regimes and regime change.

I will not be coy about my conclusions. For me, *Contentious Performances* represents the end point of Tilly's transformation from a student of the impact of social structure on collective action to a student of *the processes of political struggle*; the culmination of his quest to transform catalogs of

events into *systematic qualitative analysis*; and, finally, his definitive statement on the interaction of *statebuilding and contentious politics*. The book brings together more effectively than in any of his major works Tilly's rare combination of skills as archival historian and as capacity as a social scientific data analyst.<sup>2</sup>

I will begin where Tilly began: in the Vendée. I will then turn briefly to his apprenticeship as an "event counter" in the 1970s, before turning to his return to France in the 1980s and his move to England in the 1990s. The article concludes with *Contentious Performances* and with the challenges it offers for the future of the study of contentious politics.

### ***Capitalism and Statebuilding in France***

In *The Vendée* (1964), Tilly developed a structurally-based theory of the history of the area of France where the counter-revolution was most threatening and its repression most ferocious. In contrast to historians who saw the rebellion as the result of religion and legitimacy, Tilly saw urbanization as the fulcrum on which the counter-revolution turned, using a paired comparison of two adjoining areas to gain analytical leverage. His account ran roughly like this: When the revolution came into the hands of the urban bourgeoisie and its agents in the countryside, the urbanized Val-Saumur adapted to the changes, but the semi-urbanized Mauges produced opposition. The results were the variations in counter-revolutionary collective action that Tilly traced in the empirical sections of his book.

Thus, counter-revolutionary activity could be "explained" by structural preconditions whose importance in the industrializing Mauges was silhouetted by the contrast with the less developed Val-Saumur. Much of the first part of Tilly's career was occupied with illuminating the relations between such structural factors and contentious collective action. Put somewhat bluntly by William Sewell; "Charmed by his own universalizing rhetoric, he pursued the notion that acts of political contestation arise from gradual evolutionary changes in large and anonymous social processes..." (Sewell 1996: 253).

Anonymous social processes? Well, not quite. Even under the tutelage of Moore, Tilly was already going into the archives to look at how ordinary people and states interact in concrete political processes like "extraction, mobilization, repression, and polarization" (2008b: 3). History mattered to these processes, not only because it was a rich source of data but because it could show that "when and where a social process unfolds affects how it unfolds". "The conventional simplification – traditional peasants vs. modernizing urbanites – completely obscured the changing

alignments that occurred between 1789 and 1794," he later wrote (ibid.). To understand those changing alignments, Tilly needed to study the interactions among actors and between them and the state.

Tilly's embedding of contentious processes in social interactions was more than a curtsy in the direction of history and culture. As his work matured, he became less enamored with correlational models and more with the examination of what he would later call "relational" mechanisms and processes (McAdam et al. 2001: ch. 1; Tilly 2002). Reflecting on his early ontological choices, he would later write of the atmosphere during his early years:

In those distant days, Method meant statistical analysis, and Explanation meant one of three things: 1) location of a phenomenon within some large social structure (at the limit a society or civilization), 2) discovery of strong correlations between two variables, or (if you were lucky), 3) identification of necessary and sufficient conditions for some important phenomenon... Yet while still a graduate student I also encountered historical analysis, and realized that the search for constant conjunction and correlation had two serious defects: it ignored transformative processes and it promoted premature simplification (2008b:2).<sup>3</sup>

Those reflections ultimately led Tilly to the stance that what matters in history are not structures but interactions – and, in particular, contentious interactions.

As he shifted his focus from structure to process, Tilly's ability to consider questions of culture and identity in contentious politics increased. Processes like "extraction, mobilization, repression, and polarization" may sound abstract but they involve at least two parties. Understanding how they interact required him to examine the traditions of discourse in their societies; the events and contexts that triggered them; how third parties intervened in their relationship; and how they were either regularized or repressed or, less commonly, produced major transformations. That was the stance that led Tilly to the ontological position that he called "relational realism," which he contrasted with "methodological individualism," "phenomenological individualism," and "holism" (2008b:6-7).

By "relational realism" Tilly meant "the doctrine that transactions, interactions, social ties and conversations constitute the central stuff of social life" (2008b:7). That led him to the search for causal mechanisms that change existing relationships and to weaving those mechanisms into

larger historical processes (2002). It would ultimately lead, in one direction, to a finer-grained search for the internal mechanisms that constitute major political processes, and, in the other, to tracing the historical progression of different modes of contentious interaction that cluster into repertoires of contention. Linking those two itineraries was not going to be easy.

### ***The 1970s***

But that was for the future. In the 1970s, like many students of what he was then calling "collective action", Tilly was fascinated by the possibilities of using computer-assisted analysis to aggregate vast catalogs of events. This was especially so after scholars of the American "riots" had demonstrated how these events correlated with co-variables like the size of the urban population, the proportion of minorities in that population, and the character of policing (Spilerman 1970). When he moved from the theorized narrative of *The Vendée* to the statistical analysis of large catalogs of events, Tilly shifted from his original emphasis on urbanization to the effects of the broader processes of capitalism and statebuilding on contentious politics.

Capitalism was the major driving force in the changes in strike behavior that Edward Shorter and Tilly observed in France (1974). Although the repertoire concept is never clearly laid out there, the book developed some important elements of the idea, before the letter. As his former student, Michael Hanagan notes; "In *Strikes in France* Tilly argued that a specifically French pattern of strike action, based on short-lived but large-scale strikes waves, developed before 1914 as a result of struggles in a polity divided between clericals and republicans." There was also a presaging of his later fixation on contentious interaction: As Hanagan also writes; "In France, large scale strikes were usually terminated by government mediation and some sort of compromise settlement. In contrast, smaller strikes were more likely to be crushed."<sup>4</sup>

In *The Rebellious Century* (Tilly, Tilly and Tilly 1975) and in an important article with David Snyder (Snyder and Tilly 1972), Tilly turned to struggles for control of the state as the major triggers for collective violence. In contrast with the "hardship model" that dominated studies of contentious politics in the 1960s and early '70s, Tilly and his collaborators found that the rhythms of collective violence matched major political changes in these countries and could be best understood not as a form of disorder, but as a form of politics. This was the origin of the "polity model" that first appeared in Chapter Two of his magisterial *From Mobilization to Revolution* (1978), and the source of his growing emphasis on political

struggle. It was what eventually led him to examine the relationship between state-building and contention in Great Britain

There were two major limitations to this work of the 1970s:

- First, the “polity model” was entirely static, as he would insist in later years. It needed to give way to a model that pointed to “sequences and combinations of causal *mechanisms*” (2002; McAdam et al. 2001:11-12);
- Second, he was unsatisfied with the yield of official strike statistics and the even less accurate data on violent collective action that filled *The Rebellious Century*.

For one thing, official statistics exaggerate violence, because that is what interests the people who collect them; for another, the status of the events they record is not clear. Events could be isolated *incidents* (e.g., a single group of peasants takes the grain from a miller who has been withholding it for urban markets); part of a larger *episode of contention* (e.g., those peasants might have previously remonstrated with the miller with no results, then sent respected representatives who warn him of the consequences if he does not offer his grain to local consumers, and finally petitioned the justice of the peace for redress); or part of wider *campaigns* of contention involving whole populations touched by a general dearth or of broader *struggles*.

In the next decade, Tilly would grapple with the relationship among these different levels of contention and how they formed patterns that mark particular periods of history and changes over time. Those were the patterns that revealed would produce repertoires of contention in Britain. But the road to those patterns led through France.

### ***Contending with France***

The 1980s brought Tilly from the raw statistical analyses of his 1970s books back to historical narrative -- but to narrative of an unusual kind. In *The Vendée*, he had studied a single struggle in two adjoining areas through one provincial archive; in *The Contentious French* (1986a), he extended his reach to four hundred years of French history, devoting each chapter of the book to the sweep of contentious action in a particular region. And where *Strikes in France* and *Rebellious Century* were based on standard statistical sources, *The Contentious French* drew on enormous masses of historical material on the forms of political conflict in different regions and centuries.

Using the archives to systematically gather material on all forms of contention was an exhaustive practice but Tilly was oddly casual about which historical events he featured. Thus he devoted twenty pages to events that occurred over time in a single physical locale -- the Place de Grève in Paris -- while the epoch-shattering Revolution of 1848 merited only eleven. Why was this? The reason is that Tilly's logic was still essentially structural: the Place de Grève was important because it was where the city's commercial transactions occurred, carters carried goods to market, prices were set, and taxes collected by the state. The events he focused on there were important because they tapped into the "anonymous social processes" of statebuilding and capitalism in French society.

But unlike his books in the 1970s, in *The Contentious French* Tilly sought no statistical association between capitalism, statebuilding and changes in collective action. These processes appeared, as Sewell rightly remarks, "off stage, outside of Tilly's texts, where they are essentially assumed as ever-present and ever-rising forces, a kind of eternal yeast" (Sewell 1996b:254). Not only that: insisting as he did on these sources of contention left other causes of conflict -- like the religious wars of the 17th century -- in the shadows. Tilly was too good a historian to reduce religious conflict to the effects of capitalism or statebuilding and they appear repeatedly in the narrative; but the analytical thread of the book was strangely detached from this narrative. It remains -- as Sewell notes -- "off stage". This gap between narrative and analysis was one reason why *The Contentious French* enjoyed only modest success in France<sup>5</sup>

*The Contentious French* was more important as the source of future conceptual departures than as a systematic treatment of the history of French contention. It is where we first find an extended discussion of the repertoire, which he framed, in contrast to the then-popular view that contention is "disorderly":

In following the very same actions that authorities call disorders, we see the repetition of a limited number of actions. In seventeenth-century France, ordinary people did not know how to demonstrate, rally, or strike. But they had standard routines for expelling a tax collector from town, withdrawing their allegiance from corrupt officials, and shaming moral offenders (1986a:4).

Tilly was already seeing repertoires, not as unidirectional forms of action but as *interactions* within the political process, each interaction drawing on a combination of mechanisms. Each of these forms of action," he wrote,

links some concrete group of people to some other individual, group or groups. Each originates and changes as a function of continuing interaction – struggle, collaboration, competition, or some combination of them – among groups” (ibid.).

But he had not yet formed a clear idea of whether these repertoires are strong or weak, general or particular. And he had not yet honed the methodological tools to enumerate the vast amounts of historical he would need to track the evolution of the repertoire and map its locations in social and regime structure. The next decade – which led him across the channel from France to Britain -- would produce methodological and ontological attacks on both of these problems.

### ***GBS***

Even as he was completing *the Contentious French*, Tilly was exploring how to trace the evolution of collective action from non-official sources in what he called the “Great Britain Study” (GBS). The archives might go deeper into actual contentious interactions than official statistics did; but like the latter they concentrated on the forms of collective action that interested officials – and particularly the police. That meant they would contain a surfeit of information about violent events, anti-regime events, and events that took place in the national capital. But they told him much less about the kind of day-to-day contentious gatherings that scholars like Natalie Davis were unearthing about *charivari* in France (1975) or historians like E.P. Thompson were finding in Britain (1964; 1972). What Tilly needed was access to a broader of sources of data from the press and other qualitative sources.

For this purpose, Britain was more promising than France, both because it offered a longer history of popular publishing and because its history from the mid-eighteenth to the early-nineteenth century described a clear trajectory. In preparing *Popular Contention in Great Britain* (1995), Tilly and his group at the University of Michigan enumerated information about roughly 8,000 contentious gatherings from seven different British press sources and from the Acts and Proceedings of Parliament for southeast England for a sample of thirteen years between 1758 and 1828, and for Britain as a whole for every year between 1828 and 1834. This seventy-six year period included three major wars, the agitations over Wilkes, Queen Caroline, the Swing movement, Catholic emancipation and suffrage expansion, and took place during the heroic phase of the industrial revolution. But it also included thousands of rick burnings, machine breakings, forced illuminations, pulling down of houses, marches, petitions

and demonstrations, and other less-than-great Events, coded in standard form.<sup>6</sup> And it also saw what Tilly called “the invention of the social movement”. Plenty of contention, enough to satisfy even Tilly’s voracious appetite for data!

But how to handle it? With the exception of two early chapters, Tilly did little general statistical analysis in *Popular Contention in Great Britain* to link contentious politics to his two master processes – capitalism and statebuilding. Instead, the book divided into sections that dealt with four discrete historical periods: “The Era of Wilkes and Gordon” (1758 - 1788), “Revolution, War, and Other Struggles” (1789 - 1815), “State, Class and contention” (1816 - 1827), and “Struggle and Reform” (1828 - 1834). Dividing British history into roughly twenty year periods (only one of them containing full yearly records) made it possible to embed his data in the rich narrative histories of each period, but it made it impossible to use statistical measures of association between capitalism, state-building and collective action.

Why did Tilly decide to divide his British data into these twenty-year periods? Part of the reason was that he hoped to interest historians of Britain in the book, and most of them were still uncomfortable with quantitative history.<sup>7</sup> But another part was because he had not yet sorted out how to conceptualize the relations among events, campaigns, and broader periods of struggle. In *Strikes in France* he and Edward Shorter had studied individual events, though they gave some attention to strike waves; in *The Vendée* and *The Rebellious Century* he and his collaborators focused mainly on great violent struggles; and *The Contentious French* ranged from individual conflicts in a single site to vast revolutionary movements. In the British book, Tilly’s units of analysis were what he called “contentious gatherings”: gatherings in which “a number of people – here, ten or more – outside of the government gathered in a publicly accessible place and made claims on at least one person outside their number, claims which if realized would affect the interests of their object” (1995:63).

The curious term “gatherings” evoked the idea that Tilly wanted to deal only with microscopic units of contention, much as American scholars were dealing with what they called “protests”. Yet he was also interested in broader campaigns and in major periods of struggle, as the division of the book into the four great periods attests. While he saw the event as the basic unit of analysis in contentious politics, he was still searching for a way to link events to larger units of action. But bridging this macro/micro gap was not easy, as the work of others in France and the United States would show.<sup>8</sup>

## ***The Return of the Event***<sup>9</sup>

Why bother studying events? Why not go straight to the macrosociological trends that interest us, as Tilly's contemporary, Immanuel Wallerstein, was doing (1974). There was a grand precedent for Wallerstein's indifference; he was following in the traces of the most influential voice in European history, Fernand Braudel. Braudel had looked down his gallic nose at events as

surface disturbances, crests of foam that the tides of history carry on their strong backs....We must learn to distrust this history with its still burning passions, as it was felt, described, and lived by contemporaries whose lives were as short and as short-sighted as ours (1966:23).

In their flagship journal, the *Annales*, French historians followed Braudel in trying to break out of "*l'histoire événementielle*". They were soon joined by postmodernist critics, anthropologized historians, and Foucaultian social constructionists who saw history as "text," and cast even more doubt on the reality of the event. A healthy dose of relativism about the meaning of historical events was all that most of them sought. But other constructivists tried to shift the focus of their work from what happened to glosses on what happened, from context to text, and away from social interactions to the effects of "culture": -- which Tilly claimed they turned into "a numinous cloud hovering over social life, shifting in its own winds, and producing social action as rain or snow" (1995:40). The failure of *La France contestée* to make much of a dent in French historiography was partly due to the trend of French historians away from "*l'histoire événementielle*".

But there was a counter-trend across the channel and in the United States. In the social sciences and in those sectors of the historical profession influenced by them, events were being retrieved, organized, and analyzed in new and important ways. In Britain, social historians like Eric Hobsbawm and George Rudé were placing events at the center of their histories (1968); In France, political scientists like Pierre Favre (1990) and Olivier Filleule (1997) and historians like Michelle Perrot (1987) and Danielle Tartakowsky (1997; 2005) would later subject the strike and the demonstration to microscopic analysis. But it was in the United States -- beginning in the late 1960s -- that the turn to event-based social analysis was most deliberate and quickest to take advantage of advances of computer-assisted enumeration and analysis.

There, a group of international relations scholars followed the model of Ted Robert Gurr's work (1970) by developing computer-assisted analyses of wars, diplomacy, revolutions, and what they called "conflict events". Gurr's proposition that all forms of collective action could be explained by "relative deprivation" was a general law model which went against the grain of Tilly's preference for contextualized middle-range theory. The most striking result of this line of work was that the war capabilities of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century states were fundamentally different (Singer, Bremer, and Stuckey. 1972).<sup>10</sup> Eventually, these large-N, quantitative methods were applied to the analysis of ethnic conflicts (Gurr et al 1993) and to civil wars (Collier and Hoeffler 1998; Fearon and Laitin 2003; see the review in Tarrow 2007), as well as to conventional wars and international conflict events.

Meanwhile, in the archipelago of studies that zeroed in on protest, there were two polar approaches: *event-ful histories*, adopting the term from William Sewell's work, and *event counts*. Both schools brought events back to the center of historical social science. Between them, they will help us to situate Tilly's conception of the repertoire.

*Eventful histories*: In his work on France since the early 1990s, Sewell reacted against both the *longue durée* focus of the *Annales* school and radical deconstruction, calling for events to be the central subject of historical analysis (2005). But Sewell defined events in a way that distinguished them from ordinary occurrences (1996a and b; McAdam and Sewell 2001). In his methodological writings, he advised country-specificity, historical contingency and a focus on Great Events: events like the taking of the Bastille (1996a) and the publication of the Abbé Sieyès' *What is the Third Estate* (1994). Such liminal events, Sewell argued, are worth studying because they are the outcomes of great historical ruptures and trigger cascades of social and political change.

Picking up on Sewell's concept, Donatella della Porta also called for attention to relatively rare events that significantly transform structure. Especially during "cycles of protest," she writes, "some contingent events tend to affect the given structures by fuelling mechanisms of social change... In this sense, protest events – especially some of them – constitute processes during which collective experiences develop in the interactions of different individual and collective actors, that with different roles and aims take part in it." (della Porta 2008: 29-30). Della Porta applied her concept to the new wave of transnational and trans-European protests that were touched of the by so-called "Battle of Seattle" in 1999, focusing on their impact on the formation of transnational identities, new knowledge generation, and the creation of communities (pp. 37, 32, 41).

The strong point of the “event-ful history” proposal is to put events back at the center of structural and cultural change; while its weak point is that such an approach is less sensitive to sources of historical change that are not expressed through events. The taking of the Bastille was indeed a liminal event, with all the effects that Sewell ascribed to it. But can it be understood without reference to the slow, halting development of the routines of collective action developed by the people of Paris over the preceding decades? By focusing on big events, Sewell and della Porta clearly show how important such events can be for future change; but they are less able to embed events in event histories, like those that students of protest events have been constructing through what Tilly calls “event counts.”

*Event Counts:* In contrast to Sewell’s call for the embedding of great events in their dense historical contexts, a group of American and European scholars began to use newspaper reports to examine trajectories of contention through computer-assisted event counts. Mileposts in this progression of work were Doug McAdam’s work on American civil rights (1982 [1999]), this author’s analysis of the Italian protest cycle of the 1960s and 1970s (1989), Hanspeter Kriesi and his associates’ work on Swiss and then European social movements (1981; 1995), and Dieter Rucht’s massive study of German protest events (Rucht and Ohlemacher 1992). All of them built massive databases based largely on newspaper reports; many of them used some version of a standard protocol; and most of them employed large numbers of coders to enumerate them for computer analysis.

The extreme form of this trend to aggregation and computerization was the application of “event history” methods to contentious politics by Susan Olzak and her student, Sarah Soule. Drawing on the traditions of organizational ecology and focusing on ethnic and racially-based events in America, Olzak made *classes* of events the standardized data points in catalogs that she used as time-varying measures of socio-economic processes (1989; 1992). Using a more political-process inflected approach, Soule adopted Olzak’s methods but zeroed in on particular forms of contention – in the event, the construction of “shantytowns” to protest Apartheid on American college campuses (1997; 1999). Theirs was the history *of* contentious events, in which the temporal relation of the events to one another displaced Sewell’s concern with the place of particular events in cascades of social and political change.

The strong point of the event count approach is its power to relate forms of contentious politics systematically to the kind of non-event-ful processes that marked Tilly’s early work (e.g., industrialization,

immigration, the business cycle, variations in harvests or population growth and decline). Its weakness lay in the difficulty of relating sequences of events to *non* time-series variables like institutions, political processes, and the contingent factors that Sewell underscores in his work. It also made it difficult to detect the internal mechanisms of particular events or chains of events, such as escalation, factionalization, radicalization, moderation, and institutionalization. It was also insensitive to the internal dynamics of episodes of conflict, which Tilly increasingly looked for ways of examining systematically.

### ***Tilly's Events***

Between Sewell's focus on "event-ful" history and the "event counts" of Kriesi, McAdam, Olzak, Rucht, Soule and Tarrow, where did Tilly's work fit? To my knowledge, he never commented on Sewell's apotheosis of Great Events, except in the indirect sense that his own work is full of them. But he did comment at length on the practice of "event counts", and this takes us closer to his methodological moves of the 1990s. For many years," Tilly wrote,

Investigators sought to do one of two things with those collections [of events]: either to explain place to place variation in the intensity of conflict or to analyze fluctuations over time. For those purposes, simple counts of whole events served reasonably well. They served well, that is, so long as investigators could agree on what counted as an individual event (2008b:10).

While eventful histories were deeply embedded in particular Great Events, event-count scholars were bound by the thick-N, thin-data character of the catalogs they constructed and they tended to adopt the newspaper writer's definition of events. Tilly was looking for a middle ground, "where logical rigor meets the nuances of human interaction", between Sewell's embedding of events in thick history and the thin sweep of the event counters.

His first move was to discard the conventional practice of transforming the words in textual sources into pre-coded numerical data for purposes of analysis. For each event that he and his *GBS* coders uncovered, they assembled numerous "codesheets", compared and reconciled sources, added verbal material where it was available, and paid particular attention to how contention was organized, who organized it and who or what were its targets. Tilly was especially interested in recording all the major subjects, verbs and objects of each act of contention in his records of contentious gatherings.

In looking for models for how to do this, Tilly drew on and improved on the work of several others: from Clark McPhail, who had “decomposed actions and interactions into four broad categories: facing, voicing, manipulating and locomotion” (McPhail 1991; McPhail, Schweingrouper and Ceobanu 2006; *CP*: 23); from this author, who “incorporated textual descriptions as a number of critical points” in his otherwise quantitative codebook (Tarrow 1989; *CP*: 25); from Roberto Franzosi, who developed a logic using “observed combinations of subject, verb, and object” to identify interactions,” producing “rich analyses first of the single episode and then of many episodes” (Franzosi 2004; *CP*: 25); and, finally, from Tilly’s student, Takashi Wada, who drew subject-verb-object records from daily Mexican newspapers to develop network models of who made claims on whom” (2003; 2004; *CP*: 26).

From these analyses, Tilly drew three lessons: First, it is practically feasible to record and analyze the internal dynamics of contentious episodes instead of settling for classified event counts. Second, linking verbs with objects make it possible to move from individualistic analyses to treatments of the connections among contentious actors (*CP*: 27). Third, recording of particular verbs rather than general characterization of the action is critical for understanding the internal dynamics of contention.

The central lesson was the final one. If it is collective interaction that we are interested in, our focus should be on the action verbs that characterize the performances that link claims-makers to their objects and targets. For this, Tilly’s elaborated *GBS* codesheets offered a precious resource: rather than characterize each event or episode as an expression of a single action (e.g., “workers struck”, “students sat-in”, “terrorists bombed,”) his subject/action/object triplets allowed him to find out which interactions combined in complex episodes. That provided him with measures of the internal structure of his contentious episodes.

This laborious procedure permitted Tilly to both examine the internal structure of each contentious gathering (e.g., how many discrete forms of collective action did it contain, in what sequence, who used what forms of action against which target?) but also to detect and analyze changes in the nature of British (and by implication, modern) contentious politics over time. And this takes us to the concepts at the heart of *Contentious Performances*: episodes, performances and repertoires of contention.

### ***Episodes, Performances, Repertoires***

What we see when we examine long streams of contention are not discrete events but more complex *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 (*CP: 10*).

Episodes can be reconstructed from participants' recollections, where these are accessible; from reporting media's conventions; or by "letting observed interactions and their interruptions delimit episodes, for example, by regrouping available accounts into one-day segments of interaction" (*Ibid.*) Needless to say, Tilly chose the interactionist solution. By examining streams of contention, the inner connections within them, and the responses to them of authorities, he strove to delimit the boundaries of episodes of contention, within which particular performances combine.

The distinction between events and episodes is important, because while the former are often defined as independent happenings by a media source, the latter often combine different performances interactively. Using episodes as his unit of analysis permitted Tilly to see to what extent the same combination of performances – for example, the march ending in a public meeting; the peaceful demonstration leading to police repression, in turn leading to violent ripostes – appear repeatedly in the same episodes. And it permitted him to see how repertoires evolve: for example, when and why the ceremonial march ended in street battles, as it did in the competitive parades between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland in the nineteenth century (*CP: 172*). The episode became the unit of observation within which different performances could be observed or inferred.

*Performances* are "learned and historically grounded" ways of making claims on other people which, "in the short run...strongly limit the choices available to would-be makers of claims" (*CP:4-5*). "People make claims," he continued,

With such words as condemn, oppose, resist, demand, beseech, support, and reward. They also make claims with actions such as attacking, expelling, defacing, cursing, cheering, throwing flowers, singing songs, and carrying heroes on their shoulders" (*Ibid: 5*).

Tilly immediately added two qualifiers: one of which narrowed the range of the contentious performances he wanted to study and the other which broadened it:

- He narrowed the contentious performances he studied to those involving governments, not because he thought “governments must figure as the makers or receivers of contentious claims” but because, at a minimum, governments monitor, regulate and prepare to step in “if claim making gets unruly” (Ibid: 7);
- But he broadened the range of his inquiries to go well beyond social movements, which he defined as “a very-limited range of claim-making performances” (Ibid).

These qualifiers led to some misunderstandings. Because of the centrality of governments in his work, many of Tilly’s colleagues supposed that he wanted to dismiss non-political contention altogether. But *CP* contains “a wide range of contention in which non-governmental actors confront each other and make claims on religious, economic, ethnic, or other non-governmental holders of power” (Ibid).

The second qualifier was more important. Tilly insisted that social movements are a particular, historically-discrete form of organizing contention and not the be-all and end-all of contentious politics (2004b). He wanted to broaden the range of inquiry to all kinds of contentious events, in order to study both movements and other forms of contention (e.g., rebellions, strike waves, revolutions, nationalist episodes, democratization, terrorism), but also to focus on the dynamic processes between these different forms of contention: the protest that grows into a social movement; the movement that triggers a revolution; the repression that escalates into a coup. Only by recognizing these different types of contention and their relationships could Tilly discover whether and when there were fundamental shifts from forms that dominated contention in one period to those that replaced them: changes in repertoires.

*Repertoires* Tilly defined as “claim-making routines that apply to the same claimant-object pairs: bosses and workers, peasants and landlords. Rival nationalist factions, and many more” (*CP: 14*). This theatrical metaphor calls attention to the clustered, learned, yet improvisational character of people’s interactions as they make and receive each other’s claims”. In his most evocative simile, Tilly wrote:

Claim-making resembles jazz and commedia dell’arte rather than ritual reading of scripture. Like a jazz trio or an improvising theater group, people who participate in contentious politics normally have several pieces they can play, but not an infinity... Within that limited array, the players choose which pieces they will perform here and now, and in what order (Ibid.).

Variations in repertoires occur for three main reasons:

- first, regimes permit some performances, forbid others, and tolerate still others; that constrains actors to shy away from some performances, choose others, and innovate between the two.
- second, the history of contention constrains peoples' choices (*CP*: 16). You are more likely to call an episode revolutionary if your country has experienced one in the past than if it never experienced one.
- and third, changes in political opportunity structure encourage some actions, discourage others, and give people the opportunity to innovate on known scripts.

This model of innovation around known scripts and opportunities led Tilly to one of his more controversial claims: that "contentious performances change incrementally as a result of accumulating experience and external constraints" and not as a result of the "great events" that Sewell and others have studied (*CP*:5).

But what of the French Revolution? The suicide bomb? The sit-ins in the American civil rights movement? The wave of anti-neoliberalism that della Porta studied? Are there no epochal shifts in the repertoire of contention? Tilly's answer was: "very seldom." Instead, he saw the combination of opportunity, constraint, and innovation producing two rhythms in national profiles of contention: the short-term rhythms within particular episodes and campaigns that could produce flare-ups of innovation; and the longer-term rhythms of secular changes in national repertoires, like the one that Tilly found between mid-18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain (Tarrow 1996). Let us turn to that now.

### ***Two Repertoires***

Whereas in an early approximation Tilly had divided repertoires arbitrarily into the categories of "reactive, proactive and competitive" contention (1978:144), the procedures he followed in *GBS* and perfected in *CP* allowed him to track how the forms of contention were changing during a period in which Britain was both industrializing and parliamentarizing. That discovery, induced from the historical record, produced the theoretical typology of the forms of contention that would guide his work ever since.

Tilly saw two rough poles of contentious politics in Britain during this period, each of which was an adaptation to a different type of society. The

first he found dominant in mid-eighteenth century England, while the second become more prominent there by the 1820s and 1830s. He writes

The first is parochial, bifurcated and particular: It was *parochial* because most often the interests and interaction involved concentrated in a single community... *bifurcated* because when ordinary people addressed local issues and nearby objects they took impressively direct action to achieve their ends, but when it came to national issues and objects they recurrently addressed their demands to a local patron or authority, who might represent their interest, redress their grievance, fulfill his own obligation, or at least authorize them to act... *particular* because the detailed routines of action varied greatly from group to group, issue to issue, locality to locality ((1995:45).

The second set of events were cosmopolitan, modular and autonomous:

They are *cosmopolitan* in often referring to interests and issues that spanned many localities or affected centers of power whose actions touched many localities...*modular* in being easily transferable from one setting or circumstance to another...*autonomous* in beginning on the claimants' own initiative and establishing direct communication between claimants and nationally-significant centers of power (1995:46).

These changes, Tilly insisted, were not teleological but reflected a shift to a new set of tools that were adopted because "new users took up new tasks, and found the available tools inadequate to their problems and abilities."<sup>11</sup>

How did this dichotomy fit with the structural evolution of British society? In the course of actual struggles, people making claims and counter-claims fashioned new means of claim-making. By studying real people engaged in actual struggles with others and against the state over a period of massive economic and political change, Tilly attempted to trace the extent to which these changes related to his old friends, capitalism and state-building. For the secular changes in British collective action did not appear randomly in British history; they correlated roughly with the growing centralization of the state and the capitalization of the economy, which Tilly charted statistically and narratively in Chapter Three of *Popular Contention*.

But the reader will look in vain in *CP* for statistical evidence of the association between changes in capitalism and shifts in the nature of

contentious gatherings. Capitalism hovers offstage in this account, in part because Tilly chose not to include strikes in his enumeration but in part through an explicit choice: "For thirty years," he noted, in a personal comment, "capitalism has dominated the discussion and I want to redress the balance".<sup>12</sup> Towards what? Although they are not specified minutely, changes in the character of the British regime between the middle of the seventeenth and the first quarter of the eighteenth century are closer to the foreground of *Contentious Performances*.

### ***Regimes and Repertoires***

It was at this stage that a juncture appeared between what had previously been two distinct strands of Tilly's work: his research on contentious politics and his work on state building (Tilly, ed. 1975; Tilly 1985; 1990).<sup>13</sup> Recall that in his early work, along with "capitalism," state building was specified as a master process that accounted for changes in popular politics. As Tilly's work developed, and he examined the varieties of forms of contentious politics, that specification broadened into a variegated explicandum that resulted from the interactive process he was calling contentious politics.<sup>14</sup>

In a series of books after the turn of the century, Tilly examined the coming of democracy in Europe (2004), democracy in general (2007), and the relationships between regimes and repertoires (2006). He described that book as an "orphan" that was left in the cold outside his work on contentious politics with Doug McAdam and this author in 2001 (2006: vii). That was in part because our book, *Dynamics of Contention* was already overloaded with concepts and comparisons; but it was also because his work on contentious politics and his work on state building were still largely distinct. That gap was bridged in both *Regimes and Repertoires* and in *Contentious Performances*.

In the latter work, we see that the changes in the repertoire in Great Britain operated in two directions, both of them intimately involved with changes in the British state: internal parliamentarization and external warmaking. Both show up repeatedly throughout the period that Tilly studied. On the one hand, the British events he uncovered were increasingly directed at Parliament; on the other, they were triggered by the wars of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and by the strains of war financing.

But how closely could changes in contention be linked to changes in the British regime? Clearly, Britain was engaged in war and in war-supporting activities for much of the period he studied; and equally clearly,

Parliament was gaining more and more power from the Crown during these years, culminating in the substantial gain in power it gave itself through the First Reform Act. But how could those changes in power be connected to the changes in the repertoire? And how could those changes be generalized to countries other than Britain?

In *Regimes and Repertoires*, and in the chapter that summarized that book in *CP* (ch. 8), Tilly offers two initial generalizations:

Uniformity [in the repertoire] within regimes and differences between regimes result from two interacting influences: 1) actions of central governments that impose limits on collective claim making within the regime and 2) communication and collaboration among claimants (actual and potential) that pool information, beliefs, and practices concerning what forms of claim making work or don't work (*CP*: 149).

Curiously, Tilly does not have much more to say about the second set of processes (e.g., the term "diffusion" does not even appear in the index of the book) and the remainder of the chapter focuses on regimes and regime change. Every government, he argues, distinguishes among prescribed, tolerated, and forbidden forms of contention. Claims-makers constantly contest the boundaries between what is forbidden and what is tolerated (*ibid.*). The capacity and inclination of a government to constrain contention result from the interaction of two classical dimensions: variations in governmental capacity and the degree of democracy or non-democracy. Tilly uses that capacity-democracy space to both compare the very different forms of politics that occur in different types of regimes and to trace paths of change in regimes (*CP*: 150).

The first step in his demonstration was to show how the partial democratization and extensive increase in capacity of the British regime between the 1750s and the 1830s affected the tenor and the extent of contention over that period. His summary tells it all:

A bigger and higher-capacity state intervened more aggressively in local life, taxed more heavily, exerted more control over the food supply, and regulated workers' organizations more closely. Parliamentarization shifted power away from the crown, the nobility and their patron-client networks. It also increased the impact of the legislators' actions on local affairs. These changes gradually undermined the effectiveness of claim-making performances in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century mode: particular, parochial, and bifurcated. In their place, cosmopolitan, modular, and autonomous

performances gained leverage. Social movements came into their own (*CP*: 159-60).

But the Tilly of *Contentious Performances* wasn't satisfied with the over-time analysis of changes in British repertoires; he wanted to show that the capacity/democracy space could help to explain variations in repertoires between states as well and that histories of contentious interaction helped to shape states. And for this purpose, he compared British contention with Britain's semi-colony, Ireland. He first showed that Irish contentious performances showed only a weak tendency to move towards the social movement repertoire that triumphed in Britain after the Napoleonic wars (*CP*: 168-70); then he showed how the "connective tissue" of Irish claims makers – notably Catholic parishes and militarily-organized societies – differed from the growth of private associations in Britain (pp. 170-71); and finally he showed how the closing of the vice of British police rule forced Ireland to adopt a repertoire of insurrections and civil wars (pp. 171-2). "In the particular cases of Great Britain and Ireland from 1750 to 1840," he concluded, "repertoires and regimes unquestionably shaped each other" (p. 173).

England's relations with Ireland were not the end of Tilly's comparative explorations in *CP*. In a *tour de force* chapter called "Contention in Space and Time" he gathers together information on regime and repertoire change in countries that occupy different parts of the capacity/democracy space he developed in the England/Ireland comparison: low-capacity democratic Jamaica; low-capacity but undemocratic Nepal; relatively high-capacity undemocratic Bangladesh; and high-capacity but democratic Denmark (*CP*: 181-86). His findings: "incessant turbulence in Jamaica, post-civil war fragmentation in Nepal, constant confrontation in Bangladesh, and contained struggle in Denmark reflect the fundamental variation in the forms of contentious politics generated by differences in national regimes" (p. 186).

While it is generally accepted that the character of regimes heavily conditions how people can and wish to contend, *Contentious Performances* makes the obverse argument too: that the array of extant performances shapes and reshapes the regime. "It does so," he argues, "by inciting facilitation or repression, by creating or breaking alliances between claimants and other actors, and by succeeding or failing in pressing direct demands for regime change" (*CP*: 179).

The idea that regimes respond to changes in contention invokes the populist idea that the people rule. As Tilly showed in his empirical analyses, there was a great deal of that in British history. The waves of

mobilization over Test and Corporation repeal, Catholic Emancipation, and parliamentary reform widened the political opportunity structure for successive waves of contention and for British contention in general, and that, in turn, helped to move British politics towards democracy. But the same dynamic from regimes to repertoires can produce the opposite of democracy, as Tilly shows in his analysis of the relationship between Venezuela's regimes and contention between 1905 and 2007. That country, "from what began to look like a democratizing country during the 1970's burst of oil wealth", regressed towards fewer political rights and civil liberties. "At the same time," Tilly concludes, "Venezuelan state capacity has continued to climb" (CP: 193). Tilly leaves us to infer what even greater changes in contention – such as the attack on the World Trade Center and the Iraq war -- have meant for the nature of the American regime.

### ***Chuck's Challenges***

*Contentious Politics* represents the culmination of Tilly's contribution to the study of contentious politics and to social movements in general. Why do I think so?

- First, it bridges the artificial distinction between qualitative and quantitative approaches to show how "stories in which most reports of contention come packaged...lend themselves to systematic description and analysis" (CP:5). But its catholicity goes further: As in all his work, *Contentious Performances* shows how artificial is the wall between History and the social sciences and, within the latter, among Anthropology, Political Science and Sociology.
- Second, it bridges the thick-descriptive mode of Sewell's "events in history" with the broad historical reach of event counting and "event histories". Tilly's book identifies a middle ground between epidemiology and narrative from which it moves in three directions: "back towards epidemiology by using the interactions to reclassify the events, back towards narrative by reconstructing episodes as sequences of interactions, and toward analytic sequences transcending any particular episode, but identifying recurrent actions and relations" (CP: 206).
- Third, without loading down the reader with endless mechanisms and processes (*pace* Mcadam, et al. 2001), it is a dynamic account of how repertoires evolved and transformed in early modern Britain. The book shows how the evolution of performances and repertoires occurred through campaigns in which alterations of political opportunity structure, models of action, and connection among claimants link one campaign to the next.

- Fourth, it is deeply historical at the same time as it is broadly comparative. Tilly is as comfortable with the intricacies of Venezuelan politics under Chavez or the transformations of Russian contention between Gorbachev and Putin as he is with the changes from Test and Corporation to with the Swing movement in Britain;
- Finally, it is passionately political -- not in the superficial sense of taking a partisan stance on particular episodes but in the more profound one of inserting the reader into the thrust and parry of contentious politics.

But remember what started Tilly on the road to writing *Contentious Performances* in the first place (p. xii)? He was impatient that the concept of the repertoire had been taken up, celebrated, and cited, but was not tested, criticized, or extended. He would have been just as impatient if this article ended with a list of encomiums. Tilly would, I think, have urged us to dig deeper into his book for flaws, failings, and the future challenges. Here is one of each from one of his friendliest critics.<sup>15</sup>

*Flaws?* The biggest was his imputation of a fundamental change in the British repertoire without specifying the particular mechanisms that brought it about and their connection to the larger processes of class formation, statebuilding and capitalism in late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain. In the last article that Tilly wrote with Doug McAdam and this author (2008), he linked parliamentarization to the process of scale shift, a process that the three of us had been worrying since our joint book, *Dynamics of Contention* (McAdam, et al., 2001: ch. 11; also see Tarrow and McAdam 2005). In *CP* Tilly took that concept a step further by specifying it locally as with the growth in parliamentary power. He shows how British claims-makers shifted their targets to Parliament just as they were discarding the parochial, bifurcated and particular repertoire of the past. But the connection Tilly drew between the change in the British repertoire and the rise in Parliament's power was approximate and imputed, rather than specific and demonstrable. As for the influence of capitalism, it still hovered offstage, as Sewell noted a decade ago. For example, the emerging industrial working class's sense of collective identity as workers with shared interests and a view of Parliament as an institution that could be held responsible for their welfare is nowhere evident in the book.<sup>16</sup> Tilly has done more than any social scientist to turn our attention from structure to action;<sup>17</sup> but in the process, the influences of big structures on specific performances remains undemonstrated (1984).

*Failings?* As in much of Tilly's work *Contentious Performances* is an uneasy compromise between the general and the specific. Britain is

brilliantly portrayed as a model of the shift from traditional to modern repertoires, with Ireland as a counterpoint, and other countries inserted strategically to illustrate one point or another. But British development described a peculiar path: it was the first industrializer; it experiences the earliest modern revolution; and it was the most linear democratizer. Would the systematic shifts that Tilly traced from parochial, bifurcated and particular performances to cosmopolitan, modular and general ones apply elsewhere? Oddly, this past master of French contention never specifically compared the trajectories of British repertoire change to that of France in this book.<sup>18</sup> Had he done so, he would have had to tell us where the revolutionary Commune, the Popular Front of the 1930s and the Vichyite regression of the 1940s fit in the change in repertoires he accounts to the influence of capitalism and statebuilding in Britain.

The same lesion can be applied to contention today. Consider, with Brian Doherty (2000) the practice of the "protest camp", which developed in the 1970s peace movement. Although it is not uniquely British, it takes particular forms in Britain, is facilitated by a particular legal system and the tolerance of authorities, and has involved collective learning that goes beyond the broad category of a repeated performance. Tilly's attempt to track the development of repertoires over time goes against the grain of delving deeply enough into the internal structure of a practice to examine the micro-mechanisms of its internal dynamics.<sup>19</sup>

*Future Challenges?* Before his death, Tilly was already plotting new attacks on problems he wanted to explore.<sup>20</sup> Much better than I could have done, he closed *Contentious Performances* with an agenda for future research. "The book as a whole," he wrote, "has pursued a thin object of explanation: not the whole of contentious politics and its social bases but the public performances in which people make consequential, collective, public claims on others." It moved beyond classified event counts and single-episode narratives "towards procedures that trace interactions among participants in multiple episodes." It could have done much more, he admitted, to "look systematically at how alterations in political opportunities, available models for claim making, and connections among potential claimants produce changes in performances and repertoires". "If the weaknesses of that approach inspire my readers to invent different and superior methods for investigating contentious performances," he concluded, "I will cheer them on" (CP: 211). And so he would.

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<sup>1</sup> Go to the SSRC website for a representative list of Tilly's major publications at [www.ssrc.org/essays/tilly/resources](http://www.ssrc.org/essays/tilly/resources). Visited on 20 June 2008.

<sup>2</sup> In a personal communication to the author, Jack Goldstone adds that previously, Tilly's books "tended to lean in the direction of structural history dominated by data and models, or narratives that engaged the rich interactions among individuals as paradigmatic forms of social action. In *Contentious Performances*, Tilly goes further than ever before to bring these approaches together in a coherent analysis of social change." I am grateful to Goldstone for these characteristically acute comments.

<sup>3</sup> Tilly's growing preference for causal, over correlational analysis has sometimes been interpreted to mean that he was hostile to systematic statistical analysis. That would be a major misunderstanding of his epistemological stance; together with Doug Mcadam and this author, he argued vigorously that causal mechanisms could be traced with both systematic and statistical analysis and through detailed process tracing. See Mcadam, Tarrow and Tilly 2008.

<sup>4</sup> I am grateful to Mike Hanagan, both for the sentence I have quoted from his comments on an earlier version of this paper, and for other trenchant observations on the paper.

<sup>5</sup> Even the title of the book was mistranslated – *La France conteste* -- e.g., "France contests" (1986b), rather than "The French contest," suggesting how poorly it was understood in Tilly's *pays d'adoption*.

<sup>6</sup> See Chap. 2 and Appendices of *Popular Contention* for Tilly's procedures, which differ from standard sociological practice in the extensive computer recording of textual data and the use of interactive computer technology to transform it into reduced word form for analysis.

<sup>7</sup> For a not-atypical response of a distinguished historian of Britain to the new quantitative history in the 1970s, see Lawrence Stone's attack on Tilly in "The

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Revival of Narrative: Reflections on a New Old History," in *Past and Present* 85(1979):2-24.

<sup>8</sup> In his comments on an earlier version of this paper, Marc Steinberg observes that Tilly's analyses of performances and repertoires contains a challenge to move beyond the dualism between macro and micro that grounds most social science thinking, and wonders whether he wasn't trying to construct a new vantage point on this issue through his concept of "relational realism." I have not had time or space to reflect on this suggestive observation but refer the reader to Steinberg's stimulating work on the development of new discourses of contention in British industrial history (1995 and 1999).

<sup>9</sup> This section draws heavily on a review article published at the time Tilly published *Popular Contention in Great Britain* (Tarrow 1996).

<sup>10</sup> The culmination of this trend was to turn transcriptions of newswire reports into coded protocols through the "shallow parsing" of sentences in online texts (Schrodt 2006; Bond 2006).

<sup>11</sup> Tilly's insistence that the changes he plotted were not teleological were a direct response to Sewell's stimulating essay, "Three Temporalities" (1996b: 251-4)

<sup>12</sup> In a personal communication Tilly sent to the author, commenting on Tarrow 1996.

<sup>13</sup> As a political scientist schooled in a comparative/institutional tradition, I thought of Tilly as a master of the study of state-building, in the tradition of Weber and my own teacher, Reinhardt Bendix. It was only when I turned to the study of social movements in a systematic way that I noticed that the Tilly my sociology friends were reading was the student of contentious politics and not the student of state building I knew from comparative politics.

<sup>14</sup> I am grateful to Wayne te Brake, whose long conversation with Tilly about the nature and varieties of state building in early modern Europe was, in part, reflected in his *Shaping History: Ordinary People in European Politics, 1500-1700* (1998), for this formulation.

<sup>15</sup> Tilly ended the preface to *Contentious Performances* with the following jibe: "Once again, Sidney Tarrow made demands for revision that I could not fulfill. One of my fondest hopes is that some day I'll write a book of which Sid approves" (p. xiv.) I hope my readers will agree that I think he has done so.

<sup>16</sup> I am grateful to Jack Goldstone for pointing this out, especially given Tilly's debt to E.P. Thompson's work on the formation of working class identity in

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Britain in his *Making of the English Working Class* (1964).

<sup>17</sup> At an APSA panel organized around *Dynamics of Contention* in 2003, Tilly, responding to the charge that the book shortchanged the structural “whys” of contention, responded: “How is why!”

<sup>18</sup> Chapters 4 and 5 of Tilly’s *Contention and Democracy in Europe* (2004a) go some way to filling this lacuna.

<sup>19</sup> I am grateful to Brian Doherty for emphasizing this point and for the example of the British peace camps that he has done much to illuminate.

<sup>20</sup> One of these plans was for a book on the impact of the changes in warfare in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century on state-rebuilding, returning to his thinking on war and statebuilding in Tilly 1985 and 1990.