POWER AND PROTEST

How Marginalized Groups
Oppose the State and Other
Institutions

Edited by Lisa Leitz

RESEARCH IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, CONFLICTS AND CHANGE

VOLUME 44

POWER AND PROTEST

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RESEARCH IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, CONFLICTS, AND CHANGE VOLUME 44

POWER AND PROTEST: HOW MARGINALIZED GROUPS OPPOSE THE STATE AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

EDITED BY

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For my precious family: My parents David and Judy Hassall, and my sister Jane. Katayoun and our sons Hyde and Thomas. This page intentionally left blank

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INTRODUCTION TO POWER AND PROTEST, RSMCC VOLUME 44

Lisa Leitz and Paige N. Gulley

All discussions of social movements and social change revolve around power: Who has it? How is it imposed? How can we change its dynamics? Often our analysis is clouded by assumptions built into contemporary knowledge structures and ideas of the "other." In order to move scholarship forward, we have to take inequalities seriously, consider new forms and expressions of power, and carefully examine when challenges to power fail or thrive—just as the chapters of this volume do.

During the COVID-19 global pandemic, individuals across the United States and many other nations came out of lockdown and took to the streets to protest police killings of Black people. These protests, reminiscent of the 2014 Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests which began in Ferguson, Missouri, reignited global conversations about racialized policing, as well as numerous forms of structural, cultural, and individual racism (see Beaman, 2017, 2019; Bonilla & Tillery, 2020; Clayton, 2018; Duncan-Shippy, Murphy, & Purdy, 2017; Gallagher, Reagan, Danforth, & Dodds, 2018; Hayward, 2020; Ince, Rojas, & Davis, 2017; Mundt, Ross, & Burnett, 2018; Ray, 2020; Szetela, 2020; Taylor, 2016; Yang, 2016). The marches, sit-ins, and petitions demonstrate what Sidney Tarrow's (1998) extensive overview of the ways people have challenged the state simply called Power in Movement. Online video conferences, social media, and artistic campaigns centered minority voices and sought to empower people to resist inequity and state power and violence. Furthermore, the lead organization described one of its goals as "build[ing] local power," which can create a world "where every Black person has the social, economic, and political power to thrive" (Black Lives Matter, 2020). Activists' signs and words have illuminated the racialized operation of power in numerous institutions and highlighted the implications of these power dynamics on both individual and group psychology.

Power comes in many forms, even the bare human body, as seen in Portland, Oregon, where a young woman, dubbed "Naked Athena," struck yoga and ballet

Power and Protest

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poses in front of federal authorities until they left (Read, 2020). Despite the intense repressive tactics of the police, she was neither arrested nor harmed. Much can be made of her light skin color, whereby this woman's racial position allowed her to elude harm and to obtain largely positive media attention (see also Jackson, 2020). Such protests urge us to examine not only the power wielded by police and stripped from minorities but also the powerful role of racial and institutional identities of individuals, which can be wielded in politics and other arenas.

The global reemergence of the BLM Movement encourages scholars to reexamine state, people, embodied, and identity-based power. So too, the chapters in this volume focus on the various ways power operates in conflicts, including how individuals utilize it despite identities that many believe would lack power. The breadth of the authors' analyses of power demonstrates the interdisciplinarity of the *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change* series, incorporating numerous theoretical and research traditions. Many chapters continue this series' history of building novel and interdisciplinary conceptions, which demonstrate the insufficiency of the dominant theories and move beyond them to suggest new ways of understanding conflict.

THEORIZING MOVEMENT POWER

The first section in this volume, entitled "Theorizing the Power of Protesters," focuses on how we understand protestors' demands and their use of the resources available to them. Chapters by Gallo-Cruz and Rhomberg and Lopez particularly draw attention to the need to reconsider how power is theorized in movements. Drawing on examples from around the world, this section examines how culture shapes the ways protestors frame their messages and choose their strategies based on their own potential sources of power. The papers in this section provide new insights into how and why protestors succeed against governments initially unwilling to provide concessions.

In the first chapter of this volume, Mounira M. Charrad, Amina Zarrugh, and Hyun Jeong Ha examine how protestors frame their demands in ways that are both universal and highly personal. This framing offers powerful motivation, which sustains protestors for extended periods of time, even in the face of intense repression. Focusing on the Arab Spring uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, the authors examine over 3,500 photographs taken during the protests to identify individual demands, as depicted on signs and through other visual symbols. They find that the antigovernment messages expressed by protestors focused on the government depriving its citizens of what they believed was rightfully theirs. This leads the authors to develop the reclamation master frame, in which people demand that the government return stolen rights or satisfy unfulfilled promises.

Charrad, Zarrugh, and Ha discuss three specific areas in which protestors demanded reclamation: (1) their right to trustworthy leaders, (2) the ability to take pride in their nation, and (3) the public memory of the victims of state repression. By framing the government's actions as a betrayal of its people,

protestors asserted the legitimacy of their struggle and characterized their demands as a return to, rather than a break from, the norm. Their demands were also highly personal, especially those invoking the memory of victims of state violence, and this personal investment in the protests encouraged average citizens to continue protesting for weeks, despite ongoing state repression. Charrad, Zarrugh, and Ha's research broadens our understanding of the ways in which protestors can frame their demands and the correlation between framing and success in social movements, suggesting the need for further research on the potential power of movements to shape collective memory in ways that shift the balance of governmental power.

While framing plays an important role in protestor success or failure, equally important in understanding movements' power is their use of the resources available to them. In the second paper in this section, Chris Rhomberg and Steven Lopez utilize a case study of fast food workers' living wage campaign to demonstrate the need for a more comprehensive understanding of the various types of power available to protestors. Focusing on labor movement theories, Rhomberg and Lopez argue that traditional understandings of labor disputes prove insufficient when applied to modern-day strikes. They expand upon the power resources approach to argue that workers rely primarily on their ability to organize collectively, which the authors call "associational power." Workers then build upon their associational power by deploying the power resources, or points of leverage, available to them. Contrary to other scholars who link specific power resources to specific periods or industries, Rhomberg and Lopez argue that all types of power resources exist in all struggles and that it is the interplay between the various power resources and workers' collective action that leads to a movement's success or failure. Though Rhomberg and Lopez highlight the need for labor-specific forms of analysis, their study demonstrates the importance of delineating mechanisms within types of protestor power and the centrality of collective action to social change.

Continuing the focus on the power of collectivity, Christopher Cyr and Michael Widmeier study the correlation between group size and campaigns' use of violent or nonviolent tactics. Examining data on over 250 instances of protests against the state in the second half of the twentieth century, Cyr and Widmeier test several hypotheses, which provide important nuance for the general conclusions that have come out of the extensive quantitative analysis comparing nonviolent and violent campaigns in the work of Erica Chenoweth and her collaborators (Chenoweth, 2008; Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011; Day, Pinckney, & Chenoweth, 2015). Cyr and Widmeier find that nonstate actors with broader support, such as pro-democracy campaigns, are less likely to employ violence. while groups less reflective of their nation are more inclined to utilize guerilla tactics and other violent means. If a country is already democratizing, that increases the likelihood that a campaign is nonviolent. Organizing along ethnic lines, particularly if the ethnic group is a small proportion of the population, or around Marxist ideology is correlated with the use of violence, likely as a result of these groups' limited support base. Further, campaigns opposing occupation by foreign states are less likely to be violent only when the population they fight for is large. Cyr and Widmeier's conclusions about the correlation between population size, ideology, and state conditions suggest avenues for future examinations of when and which groups will believe that power can be obtained nonviolently.

In the final chapter of this section, Selina Gallo-Cruz proposes a new framework for understanding marginalized groups' use of nonviolent power. Challenging existing understandings of protestor power that emphasize the universality of strategies and motivations across cases, Gallo-Cruz uses a social constructionist lens to highlight the significance of a group's specific origins and position in society as it relates to their goals, the state's repression of them, and the resources available to them. She uses the Mothers of the Plaza Mayo's struggle during the Argentine Dirty War to demonstrate that marginalized groups can derive power from their social and historical position. In the case of the Mothers, she finds that their lack of power in the eyes of the regime allowed them to successfully organize without becoming targets of repression themselves. Their lack of political experience also gave them greater credibility as they spoke out in the international arena, drawing global attention to their struggle and increasing international pressure on the regime.

Gallo-Cruz urges us to consider not only actors' socially constructed position but also the specifics of the conflict itself, highlighting how the Mothers' strategies and use of power evolved with the conflict. Further, their tactics continued after the conclusion of the Dirty War, as the women continued to seek justice for their loved ones and hold perpetrators responsible for their crimes.

This first section of the book offers important directions for theorizing how participants in social movements that seem to lack power may utilize it to make social change. Throughout this section, the authors demonstrate the need to broaden our understanding of the sources and use of protestor power and its correlation with movement success. In the chapters that follow, we expand the examination of power to some of the other powerful forces in social movements.

POWER OF INSTITUTIONS AND TRADITION

From a focus on protestor power, we move into Section II, which examines the role of institutions and traditions, which are not always synonymous with one another. Institutions work to govern those under their control, be it the students at a university, the citizens of a nation, or the governments of the world. The standardized rules that they apply do not take into account the variations within these populations, and sometimes directly contradict the traditions of certain communities. In a clash between the institution and tradition, which contextual factors and strategies determine the outcome? This section will interrogate the sources and strength of institutional power, allowing us to better understand the circumstances that contribute to or challenge that power.

The first chapter in this section examines the ability of an institution to maintain power despite overwhelming opposition, demonstrating that the sources of institutional power are not always immediately apparent. Eric Schoon and Robert VandenBerg focus on the apartheid government of South Africa, an

institution long recognized as illegitimate by both the majority of the South African population and the international community. Challenging the predominant understanding that illegitimacy breeds political instability and is a catalyst of regime change, Schoon and VandenBerg highlight that the apartheid regime remained in power for decades despite both national and international opposition. Drawing on a variety of media reports, government records, United Nations transcripts, and memoirs published by key actors, they examine the rise of the ruling National Party in the late 1940s, its success in maintaining power for decades, and its defeat in the first all-race election in 1994. Rather than focusing on individual factors like international pressure or economic recession, the authors synthesize these various forces to analyze their cumulative effect on the regime's power.

Schoon and VandenBerg find that the National Party relied on the support of allies from various sectors, including academia, business, and international politics, that allowed it to maintain power despite its illegitimacy. Only when these relationships began to crumble did the apartheid regime begin to lose power. Significantly, Schoon and VandenBerg assert that the National Party's illegitimacy did not directly affect its hold on power; rather, illegitimacy eventually destroyed the regime's relationships with its most important allies, which were the source of its power. Their analysis provides important insight into the indirect effects of illegitimacy on political regimes, laying theoretical groundwork for the examination of similar conflicts.

The next two chapters in this section focus on the use of tradition to challenge the power of institutions, analyzing the conditions under which such challenges are successful. Bradley Tatar's chapter takes us to South Korea to examine a traditional practice in conflict with international norms. Tatar details the rise of the pro-whaling movement in the South Korean city of Ulsan and the movement's strategic use of heritage and tradition to oppose the international ban on whaling, Focusing on the confrontation between Korean pro-whaling protestors and Greenpeace activists during the 2005 meeting of the International Whaling Commission in Ulsan, Tatar draws on media reports and interviews with protestors on both sides. He finds that Korean pro-whaling protestors strategically framed their position as an issue of local heritage, constructing a tradition of whaling that has become an important part of the community's identity. In doing so, pro-whaling activists acknowledged that anti-whaling is the global norm and framed their demands as an exception to, not the removal of, the norm. Tatar argues that by using the language of heritage and local tradition, protesters were able to garner support from those outside of their community and eventually succeed in their efforts to gain an exemption from international regulations. His work highlights the ways in which tradition can be strategically constructed and employed by protesters who wish to challenge institutionalized norms.

Appeals to the power of tradition do not guarantee the success of a movement, however. In the final chapter in this section, Jonathan Coley analyzes the efforts of conservative Christian activists on college campuses to gain exemptions from university policies, specifically as they relate to the inclusion of LGBTQ+ students. Coley details how conservative Christian student organizations at Vanderbilt

University asserted that the ability to discriminate based on sexual orientation and religious belief was an issue of religious freedom. Drawing on campus newspaper reports, policy statements, and ethnographic observations made during the protests, Coley outlines students' ultimate failure to gain the exemptions they demanded. He finds that the conservative Christian activists were unsuccessful due to certain characteristics of Vanderbilt University itself. Developing the concept of "educational opportunity structures," Coley argues that a combination of university factors, namely the institution's prestige, wealth, religiosity/secularism, and public/private nature, shapes the likelihood that a university will ultimately prevail over student activists.

EXAMINING POWER

This volume continues *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change's* multidisciplinary and multimethod examination of both how social movements challenge power structures and the ways that power shapes the context and range of experiences in a conflict. Moving beyond international relations scholars' continued emphasis on states, as noted in previous volumes of *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change* (e.g. Coy, 2017), this volume emphasizes the complex web of actors in international and national conflicts and the power in collective action, or what many within the nonviolence tradition refer to as "people power" (Ackerman & Kruegler, 1994; Carter, 2013; Elwood, 1997; Schock, 1999, 2004; Zunes, 1999). In fact, many of these chapters highlight the limits of governmental power and demonstrate the power of marginalized groups.

Analyses of power are necessary beyond academic circles and political discourse, and such examinations are often a critical aspect of the strategic work of nonprofits, social movements, community organizations, and other agents for social change. We invite submissions to Volume 46, which will examine these organizations' engagement in power struggles, and particularly welcome those examining the role of race and ethnicity in conflicts and social movements. As mentioned earlier, BLM offers many important avenues for examining the continuing significance of race, and we invite analyses of this movement. The summer of 2020 has seen waves of antiracism protests around the globe, which have sparked relatively rapid changes to policies and evoked promises from parliamentary bodies, companies, universities, and artistic stakeholders in Europe and the United States to be more inclusive (King, 2020; McAuley, 2020; Rich & Hida, 2020). These developments offer exciting opportunities for examining protestors' use of violence/nonviolence, as well as other aspects of strategy, tactics, mobilization, and resources, in order to better understand what methods lead to success, failure, or placation. While Volume 46 will be open to all submissions, one section will be devoted to BLM and other movements for racial equity and the operation of race in social movements, and we encourage submissions examining these issues in social change organizations beyond those considered protest groups.

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