
STUDYING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS/
STUDYING COLLECTIVE ACTION

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Languedoc: 1682

Instead of sitting in chilly Stockholm during the winter of 1978, imagine yourself strolling in sunny Narbonne, France, during a summer almost three centuries ago. On the first of August, 1682, according to the report which the Intendant of Languedoc sent to Paris:

. . . there was a little movement in Narbonne on the occasion of the collection of the cosse tax, which had been ordered by an act of the royal council. Many women gathered with the common people, and threw stones at the tax collectors, but the Consuls and the leading citizens hurried over and put a stop to the disorder . . . (A.N. [Archives Nationales, Paris] C⁷ 296; see also Archives Communales, Narbonne, BB 29, folio 144).

Now a cosse was a local grain measure which held something like five liters. More important, it held one-fortieth of a setier of grain; to collect one cosse per setier, which was the aim of those tax collectors, was to tax grain at 2.5 percent. The royal domain had long held the legal right to collect the cosse on all grain sold by outsiders at Narbonne, but the sixteenth-century wars of religion had interrupted the collection of the tax. In 1682, the royal council (guided by Colbert in its incessant search for revenue to pay for royal wars and regal display) had authorized the royal property agent to begin anew the collection of the cosse. The agent ordered the construction of toll booths at the city's gates, and directed his clerks to collect the tax on all grain brought in by non-residents

The city's Consuls did what they dared to oppose the cosse -- and, especially, its collection at the gates rather than at the market -- on the ground that it would discourage trade and raise the price of food in the

city. But their daring did not go very far. While the Consuls filed ineffectual protests, the city's women gathered and stoned the tax collectors. Their "little movement" failed to halt the collection of the tax. Yet after years of conflict and negotiation, in 1691 the Intendant finally arranged the conversion of the cosse into a general cash payment from the Estates to the royal property agent (A.N. C⁷ 298, 299, 300). For all their disapproval of protest in the streets, the authorities recognized that the reinstated tax was inconvenient, and perhaps unjust.

Let us neglect the complexities of seventeenth-century finances, and focus on that "little movement" of Narbonne's women. It resembled many other local French conflicts of the seventeenth century in that it involved direct action against the royal attempt to levy new taxes. It resembled many other troubles following the mid-century Fronde (but differed from many before and during the Fronde) in that the authorities, despite their opposition to the royal measure, immediately stepped in to repress the popular resistance. It resembled many other struggles of the time in which women played an especially prominent role in that the immediate issues concerned food, marketing and the cost of living. In these regards, the August confrontation in Narbonne stands for thousands of other seventeenth-century conflicts. (See Bercé 1974, Pillorget 1975 and Porchnev 1963 for numerous examples.)

What should we call it? The local authorities called it not only a petit mouvement, but also an émotion populaire and a désordre. All these terms belonged to the period's standard vocabulary; they designated a localized collective action by ordinary people which it was necessary and proper to end by force. But what should we call it? That is a conceptual question. Using the terminology of the time is one possible answer to the question; perhaps we should settle for émotion or désordre, much as we usually insist

on calling the royal officers of the time by their rightful titles instead of substituting the closest twentieth-century equivalent. Yet the terminology of the time brings along its own ambiguities, variations and overtones, and makes it the more difficult to undertake the sort of comparison we might want to try between the fighting women of Narbonne in 1682 and the fighting women of, say, Sweden in the twentieth century.

Since the authorities of Narbonne themselves used the word mouvement, would it be legitimate to apply the venerable label "social movement"? That would probably cause more confusion than insight. Somehow a social movement should be more durable than that fleeting encounter between Narbonne's women and the tax collectors; it should pursue broader aims than the blocking of a particular toll. If, on the other hand, we were convinced that the little affair of 1682 was only one incident in a long series, that the women of Narbonne were aware of their common interests and distinct identity, and that they were self-consciously seeking a set of changes considerably larger than the suspension of one tax or another, then we might comfortably begin to think in terms of a social movement.

The Camisards

In the Languedoc of that time there was at least one set of people who met those demanding standards. They were not the women of Narbonne, but the Protestants -- women, men and children alike -- of the mountains. For about four decades, beginning in the 1670s, the same correspondence of the Intendant which reported the Narbonne affair was packed with discussion of the "fanatics". During the 1670s, the Intendant followed royal policy by squeezing out of public office those Protestants who refused to abjure their faith. The measures against the "R.P.R" (Religion Prétendue Réformée - So-Called Reformed Religion) broadened and intensified during the early 1680s.

The Protestants prepared to defend themselves. "The Huguenots of the

Vivarais," reported the Intendant in August 1683,

continue not only to preach in forbidden places, but also to prepare for war. It is true that they have no chiefs, not even halfway-qualified gentry, in their party; we took care of that by seizing all the leaders that appeared, or that we suspected, right at the start. All the same, they have managed to set up a sort of military base. They have organized companies under specific commanders. They have captured some castles. They are digging in, they have ammunition and arms. In a word, whipped up by ministers who preach nothing but sedition and rebellion, they give every appearance of planning to resist the king's troops . . .

(A.N. G⁷ 296).

The most serious was yet to come. In 1685, with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, began the major drive to convert, or at least to suppress, the many Protestants of the Cévennes, the Vivarais, and other regions of Languedoc. From that time on, relations between the province's royal officials and its Protestants swung between open war and troubled peace.

Immediately after the revocation, a new Intendant of Languedoc, Nicolas de Lamoignon de Basville, declared his hope of mastering the enemy by means of severe and ostentatious repression; an early effort was his hanging seven and decapitating one of the illegal assembly of "new converts which had killed two of the soldiers sent to break it up." ("New converts" were people who had nominally subscribed to Catholicism, but had actually retained their Protestant ties.) "There are no ministers preaching," he wrote contemptuously, "there are nothing but miserable preaching carders and peasants who lack even common sense; I hope to arrest two or three of them that I haven't

been able to find yet" (A.N. G⁷ 297, October 1686). Vain hope. The "assemblies in the desert" multiplied, Protestant military forces sprang up in the backlands, and the royal troops found themselves beginning a guerrilla operation which lasted intermittently for twenty-five years.

By the end of the 1680s, inspired prophets -- men and women, boys, and, especially, girls -- were preaching in the Vivarais. By the end of the century, poor men and women possessed by ecstatic trances and the gift of prophecy were communicating divine instructions to the people of the Cévennes. There in the Cévennes the Protestant rebels took on the name of Camisards. In 1703, the same Intendant who had hoped, seventeen years earlier, to break Protestant resistance through spectacular but limited punishment resorted to ordering the entire Protestant countryside of the Diocese of Mende evacuated, and dozens of villages burned to the ground. The strategy of scorched earth did not begin in the twentieth century. Even with that ferocious treatment it took another year to check the major Camisard rebellion, another six years to smash the last Camisard military force, another ten or twenty years to fragment and tame the region's Protestants to the point that they no longer posed a serious challenge to royal authority. As late as 1710, a royal patrol fell upon "an assembly in the parish of Saumane, of five armed men and twenty women", killing two men and four women in the process (A.N. G⁷ 314, July 1710).

Who were these zealots? The question is a nettle, difficult to grasp without being stung; the answer varies according to our choice of time point, region and (most importantly) criterion of membership. At one extreme, we might be thinking of all the Protestants in Languedoc: 202,794 of the province's 1,561,541 inhabitants, according to the ludicrously precise statistics reported by the Intendant in 1698 (A.N. H 1588²⁶). At the other extreme, we might take only the few thousand who at one time or another actually engaged in armed combat with royal troops. Somewhere in the middle, we might place the

many thousands who at least one time joined one of those illegal "assemblies in the desert" to hear a sermon, a prophecy, a reading of the Bible and an exhortation to resist the Antichrist.

One might justify the first definition, the entire Protestant population, by pointing out the important moral, political and material support the activists drew from the general population of the Protestant regions; then the Camisards would appear to be a movement drawn disproportionately from the prosperous and commercial milieu of Languedoc. But the more stringent the criterion of membership, the more plebeian the Camisards become: wool carders, weavers, carpenters, bakers, agricultural laborers and other ordinary rural workers seem to have provided the bulk of the day-to-day activists, female and male. By the standard of open rebellion, it was clearly a popular mouvement.

And what did they want? Again the answer varies with the precise phrasing of the question. At times Camisard leaders bid for the abolition of taxes. They often declared against the ecclesiastical tithe. They consistently sought -- and acted out -- the freedom to assemble in the name of their faith. From time to time they dreamed and prophesied the return of their exiled pastors. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie writes of "an explosive mixture of prophetic neurosis and fiscal agitation," while Philippe Joutard emphasizes the Camisard "refusal to submit blindly to the central power, and affirmation of the superiority of conscience" (Le Roy Ladurie 1966: I, 629; Joutard 1965: 19). All these, and more, are possible definitions of the interests, grievances, beliefs and demands around which the Camisards built their movement.

A Social Movement?

But, once again, is the word "movement" appropriate? The query is not a finicky doubt about English usage, since a precisely parallel concept appears in other European languages: Bewegung, dvizhenie, movimento, r rsele. So far as common English is concerned, for that matter, we unquestionably have the right to call the actions of the Camisards a movement of some kind; all the dictionary requires is a "series of actions and endeavors of a body of persons for a special object." Yet consider one of the more careful efforts to turn the catch-phrase "social movement" into a workable tool of analysis:

A social movement is a deliberate collective endeavour to promote change in any direction and by any means, not excluding violence, illegality, revolution or withdrawal into "utopian" community . . . A social movement must evince a minimal degree of organization, though this may range from a loose, informal or partial level of organization to the highly institutionalized and bureaucratized movement and the corporate group . . . A social movement's commitment to change and the raison d'etre of its organization are founded upon the conscious volition, normative commitment to the movement's aims or beliefs, and active participation on the part of the followers or members (Wilkinson 1971: 27).

Well! If that is a social movement, it is debatable whether the Camisards qualify. The commitment to change is debatable, the minimal organization is debatable, even the normative commitment to a presumably unitary set of aims raises a shadow of a doubt. If the coherent Camisards do not qualify as a social movement, on the other hand, who does? In fact, a

number of groups which have formed and acted in Languedoc over the last century does seem to meet Wilkinson's tests for a social movement: deliberate collective endeavor to promote change, and so on. One dramatic case in point is the winegrowers of the Midi, who responded to the overproduction crisis which began in the 1890s by organizing unions, staging strikes and demonstrations and, in 1907, mounting a great "revolt" which featured vast meetings, huge demonstrations, attacks on prefectures, and temporary takeovers of major cities. Somehow that series of actions exemplifies what Wilkinson and other scholars have in mind when they discuss and define social movements. So do a number of other phenomena -- labor movements, political movements, even Protestant religious movements -- which Languedoc has produced since the later nineteenth century. The comparison of the twentieth-century winegrowers with the seventeenth-century Protestants raises the suspicion that the notion of the social movement is more closely tied to the social organization of our own time than the abstract phrasing and universal sweep of the usual definitions suggest.

The suspicion is well founded. Both the concept and the phenomenon it represents are largely nineteenth-century creations. The concept "movement", in the sense of sustained collective action, drew some of its initial appeal from its mechanistic analogy, and then there was the Social Movement -- die soziale Bewegung -- the historical trend which most observers identified with the rise of the working classes. That idea of a dominant historical trend tied to the changing position of a particular class of people was one of the chief tools of social analysis bequeathed by the nineteenth century to the twentieth. The idea of many such movements, not all of them beneficent or even connected with one another, is a simple adaptation of the basic concept in the fact of a stubbornly diverse reality.

The Rise of Social Movements

The reality itself was largely a nineteenth-century creation. People have, to be sure, banded together more or less self-consciously for the pursuit of common ends since the beginning of history. The nineteenth century saw the rise of the social movement in the sense of a set of people who voluntarily and deliberately commit themselves to a shared identity, a unifying belief, a common program and a collective struggle to realize that program. The great bulk of the earlier uprisings and popular fervors to which we are tempted to apply the term were fundamentally defensive actions by groups which had long existed; during the aggressive expansion of states in the seventeenth century, the standard case was the concerted resistance by the people of long-established communities to the imposition of new forms of taxation which infringed their rights and jeopardized their survival. Although plenty of nineteenth-century movements had defensive origins, the remarkable feature of that century was the shift to the deliberate constitution of new groups for the offensive pursuit of new rights and advantages.

The rise of the social movement belongs to the same complex of changes which included two other profound transformations in the character of popular collective action: the growth of national electoral politics, and the proliferation of created associations as the vehicles of action. Notice the difficulty faced by Rudolf Heberle, in a standard American textbook on social movements, when he seeks to dissociate the movement from the political party. After adopting Schumpeter's description of a political party as a group of people who "propose to act in concert in the competitive struggle for political power," Heberle goes on to say:

This definition leaves open the question of whether the main uniting bond in a party is a principle, a complex of common and similar interests, an emotional attachment to a leader, or

simply the desire to secure offices and patronage for members of the group. A genuine social movement, on the other hand, is always integrated by a set of constitutive ideas, or an ideology, although bonds of other nature may not be absent. Furthermore, a party is by definition related to a larger group, within which it operates against at least one partial group of similar character. Parties can appear in all kinds of corporate groups, but a political party by definition can occur only within a body politic, that is, only within a state. A social movement, on the other hand, need not be restricted to a particular state or to a national society. In fact, all major social movements have extended over the entire sphere of Western civilization and even beyond. Finally, without intent to belittle the need for precise conceptual distinctions, we shall be more concerned with the relations between social movements and other action groups than with the "differences" (Heberle 1951: 11).

The net result of all this maneuvering is, ironically, to stress the resemblance between social movements and political parties. They are frères ennemis, each taking part of its identity from the contrast with the other. A social movement is essentially a party with broad aspirations and a unifying belief system. A political party is a tamed, nationalized social movement. That is why Heberle can step easily to the analysis of Nazism and Communism, and why we sense a vague unease when attempting to treat the seventeenth-century Camisards as a social movement.

Let me spare you a review of the various, ambiguous and sometimes sloppy uses to which the concept "social movement" has been put. My aim here is neither to castigate other conceptualizers, nor to plead for more

precise, adequate and comprehensive definitions, nor yet to argue that "social movement" is a poor concept because it is historically specific. Far from it. I want to argue that the recognition of the historical specificity of the forms of collective action is the beginning of wisdom. I hope to situate the concept of social movement in its historical setting, and to suggest how its strengths and weaknesses reflect the realities of that historical setting. I mean to lay out a set of concepts for the analysis of collective action which is quite general in its pretensions, which is nevertheless amenable to historical specification, and which therefore takes in the social movement as a special case -- as one of many ways in which people have joined together to pursue their common interests. I have begun with distant seventeenth-century examples in order to dramatize the choices and costs involved in building very general models of collective action.

Some Models of Collective Action

The theoretical problem we face is this: given any set of people, chosen for whatever reason, how can we judge the likelihood that they will act collectively in a certain way and to a certain degree? Collective action itself is a broad but simple concept; it includes all the ways in which people join their efforts in pursuit of common ends. It is often useful to narrow the concept a bit and to concentrate on efforts to produce collective goods: social products which, if provided to one member of a group, cannot easily be denied to other members of the group. Examples are clean air, freedom of assembly and fiscal equality. In either the very broad or slightly narrower version, collective action obviously includes a great variety of behavior: petitioning, making revolutions, praying together, demonstrating, setting market prices, resisting tax collectors, battling royal troops, and much more. The essential is that there be common ends,

and common efforts toward those ends.

A first rough distinction separates a group's internal capacity to act from its external opportunities to do so. On the capacity side, we need the following concepts:

interests: the shared advantages or disadvantages likely to accrue to the set of people in question as a consequence of various possible interactions with other populations;

organization: the extent of common identity and unifying structure among the set of people;

mobilization: the extent of resources under the collective control of the set of people.

Each of these states has a counterpart process: the change in the extent or character of shared interests, the increase or decrease of the group's level of organization, the mobilization or demobilization of the group. In its simplest possible version, our analysis of a population's capacity to act collectively is likely to run:



In this elementary model, shared interests promote organization, higher levels of organization promote increased mobilization, and mobilization facilitates collective action, but each element also varies in part independently of the others.

Complications spring to mind immediately. For example, the experiences and outcomes of collective action tend to alter a group's interests -- or at least its shared definitions of those interests. That is the process to which Michels called attention with his Iron Law of Oligarchy: that "class

struggles invariably culminate in the creation of new oligarchies which undergo fusion with the old" (Michels 1949: 407). Michels emphasized the cooptation of the new leaders, but even in the absence of cooptation the acquisition of power alters some interests. That is a complication which any sophisticated analysis of large-scale collective action must confront. There are many others. Yet the elementary version of the model is useful in several ways. It lays out an agenda for theory and research: treat interests, organization, mobilization and collective action separately before examining their relationships. It breaks with a good deal of analysis -- for example, most work in the tradition of crowd psychology and "collective behavior" -- which tends to reason directly from interests to action, and to attach little importance either to the character of a group's internal organization or to its current state of mobilization. It forces us to recognize that many groups which share an interest in collective action nevertheless do not act, because they lack internal organization, because they have too few resources under collective control, or because collective action would overtax the resources they do have available. In general, the scheme emphasizes the costs and returns involved in collective action much more than is customary in sociological and historical work on the subject.

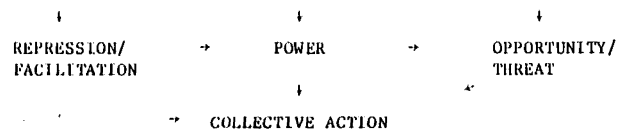
On the side of external opportunity, we need these concepts:

power: the extent to which the outcomes of the population's interactions with other populations favor its interests over those of the others; acquisition of power is an increase in the favorability of such outcomes, loss of power a decline in their favorability; political power refers to the outcomes of interactions with governments;

repression: the costs of collective action to a group resulting from interaction with other groups; as a process, any action by another group which raises this group's cost of collective action; an action which lowers the contender's cost is a form of facilitation; we may reserve the terms political repression and political facilitation for the relationships between groups and governments;

opportunity/threat: the extent to which other groups, including governments, are either a) vulnerable to new claims which would, if successful, enhance the group's realization of its interests or b) threatening to make claims which would, if successful, reduce the group's realization of its interests..

The simplest possible model of the opportunity side is somewhat more complicated than the elementary model of the capacity side. It looks like this:



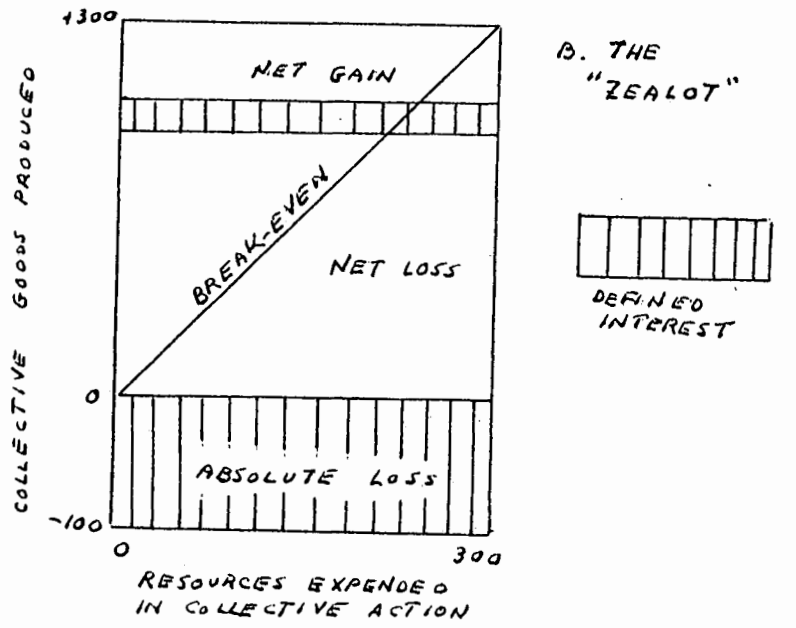
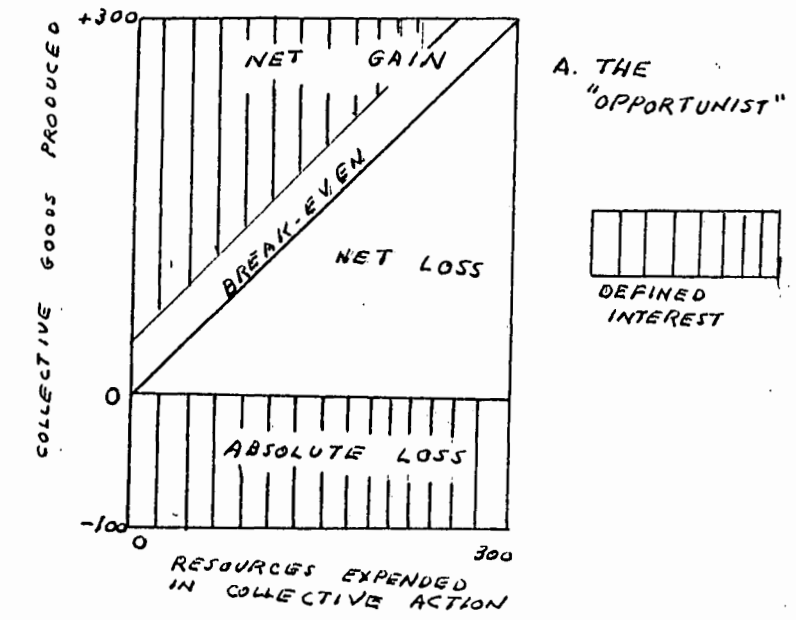
The elementary model again asserts that the components vary in partial independence of each other. It shows no direct connection between repression/facilitation and collective action on the ground that repression works through power: through its effect on the likely favorability of the outcomes of interactions with other groups. It indicates that a group's power directly affects the opportunities and threats to which it is exposed. Once more the model stresses costs and benefits rather more than is habitual in historical and sociological analyses of collective action.

A Diagrammatic Excursion

For a full model of collective action, we obviously need connections between the capacity model and the opportunity model. For example, repression often acts directly on mobilization, as when a government raises a group's mobilization costs by disrupting its internal communications and forbidding it to assemble. The tracing of such connections is important work, but it would lead this discussion too far afield. Let us settle for some of the connections, and for another sort of diagrammatic summary. In this case, we are neglecting qualitative characteristics of the group and of the action, seeking only to judge the likely extent of collective action in which a given group will engage at a particular point in time. Figure 1 shows the basic framework for calculating the desirability of various levels of collective action. Both diagrams state the quantity of resources expended in collective action and the value of collective goods produced in terms of arbitrary and equivalent units -- a heroic simplification which sweeps aside some of the largest difficulties in the empirical study of collective action. The values of those units are not from the viewpoint of the particular actor whose action we are analyzing, but from the perspective of an outside observer; the "outside observer" could rely on the market value of the resources involved, or on the average exchange rates (for example, the number of jobs acquired for group members per 100 person-hours of collective effort) observed over a wide range of participants in collective action. As a consequence, the area above the diagonal in each diagram represents a net gain: a greater value in collective goods produced than in resources expended. The diagrams also envision the possibility of collective bads, as represented by the area of absolute loss below the zero line.

The two diagrams portray contrasting ways that some groups define

FIGURE 1. CALCULATING POSSIBLE RETURNS FROM COLLECTIVE ACTION



their own interests. The "opportunist" group defines any significant net gain (regardless of the kinds and quantities of collective goods involved) as in its interest, and any absolute loss as contrary to its interest. The opportunist would never, however, be interested in acting collectively in such a way as to produce a net loss. The situation of the "zealot" is very different. For the sake of simplicity, the diagrams assume that opportunists and zealots have the same aversion to collective bads; the shaded area of absolute loss below the zero line in both diagrams is therefore the same. But when it comes to collective goods the zealot is interested in only a very narrow range: concerned only with freedom of assembly, let us say, but not with clean air. Furthermore, the zealot defines its interest as extending across the diagonal into the area of net loss; the zealot is willing to take what other actors would regard as a loss in order to achieve its specialized goals. All other things being equal, therefore, we would expect the opportunist to respond to a wide range of opportunities and to engage in a relatively great variety of collective actions so long as the environment was responsive, while we would expect the zealot to be much more selective, but to persist in the face of a hostile environment.

Clearly the opportunist and the zealot are not the only possible configurations of interest. The Camisards we discussed earlier appear to be extreme even among zealots: willing to take absolute losses in order to survive as a group and in order to wait for the opportunity to realize their narrowly-defined interest in uninterrupted worship. There are "misers" which are very responsive to any threat of absolute loss, but unwilling to risk any substantial resources for a possible gain. Most of all, I believe, there are run-of-the-mill collective actors which define their common interest rather narrowly, as do the zealots, but differ from the zealots in refusing to act when the likely outcome is a net loss.

Collective Action with Constraints

The diagrams of Figure 1, however, represent too few of the constraints which limit the possible action of our opportunists and zealots. A second pair of diagrams, in Figure 2, brings in the major constraints which figure in the capacity and opportunity models presented earlier. In this imaginary comparison, the opportunist and the zealot are in similar situations; only their patterns of interest differ. Horizontally, the current state of opportunity sets a maximum to the quantity of collective goods any amount of collective action could extract from the environment, and the current state of threat sets a limit to the collective bads that could possibly be visited upon our actors. For both the opportunist and the zealot, the current level of threat falls considerably short of total loss of what they possess and value. For the opportunist, the limit set by current opportunity means that there is a considerable area of its interest (the cross-hatched area above the opportunity line) which simply cannot be realized in this state of the world, but at least there is a small portion of its interest which is theoretically available. The zealot is worse off: in the current condition of the surrounding world, no portion of its defined interest is even theoretically available; the entire interest area lies above the opportunity line.

Imagine now a change in the structure of opportunity and threat. Any rise in the opportunity line improves the situation of the opportunist by increasing the area of its defined interest that is available, while any drop in that line immediately hurts the opportunist's interests. Any increase in the amount of threat immediately affects the interest of both the opportunist and the zealot. But no decline in the current level of opportunity makes any difference to the zealot's interest, and only a substantial rise in the level of opportunity can improve its chances of realizing

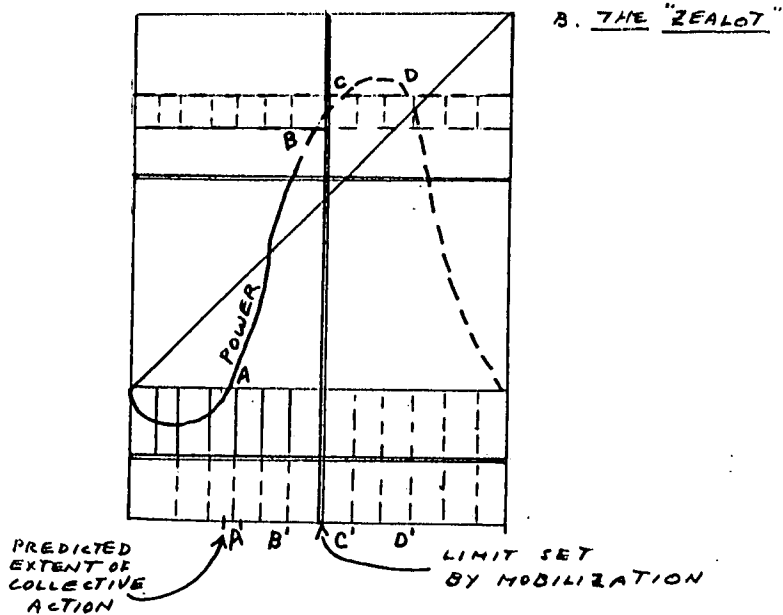
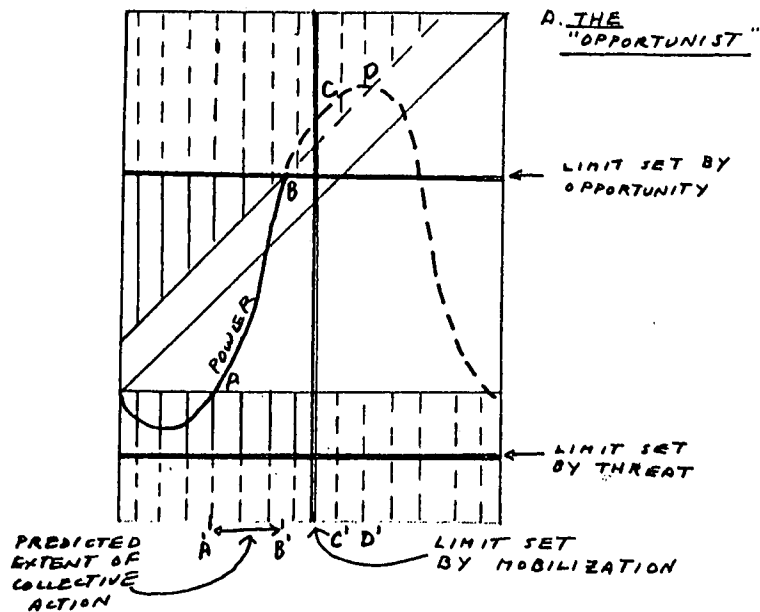
that interest. These differences lead us to expect considerable differences in the response of opportunists and zealots to general changes in the openness of the surrounding world; among other things, we expect much more abrupt changes in behavior from the zealot than from the opportunist.

The heavy vertical line represents the limit set by mobilization; to the right of the mobilization line, collective action may be theoretically possible, but the actor has too few resources to act. In the current situation of the opportunist, the limit set by its mobilization is no great inconvenience, since it has enough resources to perform any collective action now within the range set by opportunity. For the zealot, likewise, opportunity sets such a stringent limit that its current level of mobilization is no great constraint. If the limit set by opportunity rose considerably, however, both of them would feel the mobilization limit keenly; for each, the entire area of interest to the right of the mobilization line would be unavailable.

A change in the mobilization level would also matter. Given the current opportunity level, an increase in the zealot's mobilization would not improve its prospects noticeably; a demobilization would only matter if it went so far as to compromise the zealot's ability to withstand current threats. For the opportunist, on the other hand, any significant demobilization will reduce the area of its interest which is available. The current opportunity level makes an increase in mobilization unprofitable. In this configuration the opportunist has considerably more to lose from demobilization. Neither one, however, is likely to gain from increased mobilization unless the level of opportunity also rises.

There is one more factor: power. The power lines in the two diagrams represent the most likely returns in collective goods for various quantities of collective action -- if current mobilization and opportunity permit

FIGURE 2. THE LIMITING EFFECTS OF POWER, MOBILIZATION AND OPPORTUNITY/THREAT



them. They portray power because they show how little or how much a given actor can get from others with a certain level of effort; to get a large return from others for a small investment in collective action is a sign of substantial power. (As one more simplification, I have taken the improbable step of giving the opportunist and the zealot similar power curves; in real life, zealots tend to be less powerful, and to experience greater discontinuity in the returns they receive from the surrounding world.) The power curves are broken beyond the limits set by opportunity and mobilization, since beyond those points they are purely theoretical. The shape of the curves sums up the expectation that, in general, a small amount of collective action will bring a negative response -- collective bads -- from other parties, beyond a certain point increasing collective action will produce increasing amounts of collective goods, but beyond some further point the actor's demands will begin to exhaust the collective goods available, to threaten the interests of other parties seriously, and to stimulate increasing resistance from competitors. As a consequence, there is some intermediate level of collective action beyond which it would not pay to go even if opportunity and mobilization were unlimited.

Given these circumstances, our opportunist has the interest, the opportunity and the capacity to reach at least point A on the power curve; it will take at least that much to forestall the existing threat of damage to the opportunist's interests; that means a minimum collective action level of A'. The opportunist can also reach point B on the curve without passing the limits set by opportunity and mobilization; since B brings the opportunist to the edge of its defined interest, we expect collective action of level B' as well. Our best prediction for the opportunist is therefore a quantity of collective action ranging from A' to B' or, more likely, clustering at both ends of that range. Again the zealot's calculations are

different: we still expect defensive action in the amount of A' to forestall the threat of loss. But position B on the power curve is not currently available; it is within the limits set by mobilization, but beyond the maximum allowed by opportunity. So our best prediction for the zealot is a purely defensive collective action in the amount of A' . . . and great alertness to possible changes in opportunity.

For both our parties, barring changes in their power positions, the ideal circumstances would require increases in both opportunity and mobilization. The ideal position for the opportunist is at C, which is currently out of reach; there the net return of (collective goods received - resources expended) is greatest. That would require C' in collective action. Under no circumstances would the opportunist have an incentive to go beyond D' in collective action, since beyond D the net returns fall below the opportunist's minimum requirements and then turn into net losses. In fact, B is just as profitable as D, and no doubt a good deal safer. In this power configuration the opportunist has a weak incentive to increase its mobilization and a moderate incentive to manipulate, if possible, the existing structure of opportunities. The zealot, by contrast, has a very strong incentive to manipulate opportunities if that is possible. Position B on the power curve is the minimum that will permit the zealot to realize any of its interest. It will take a movement to C (and therefore an expenditure of C' in collective action) to realize all of its interest. Beyond C the zealot can move into returns that other groups would value highly, but which are not its concern. Beyond D our zealot has absolutely no interest in collective action. With unlimited opportunity and unlimited mobilization, then, we might reasonably expect the zealot to situate its action around C', and certainly never to pass D'.

And if power position changed? Let us neglect alterations in the

shape of the power curve, although they are very interesting to follow. Remember that a general rise in the position of the curve represents an increase in power, a decline in its position a loss of power. For either the opportunist or the zealot, it would not take much of a power loss to place the entire curve below the diagonal, in the zone of net loss. That shift would reverse our expectations somewhat. For now, regardless of opportunity and mobilization, we would never expect the opportunist to take any more than defensive action. Under the proper combination of opportunity and mobilization, however, we might well see the zealot acting to realize its interest while taking what other groups regard as a net loss.

An increase in power would also have rather different effects on the two sorts of actor. Given no change in opportunity, an increase in the opportunist's power would probably lead to a decline in its level of collective action; the maximum return would be available for less effort; there would be no advantage in expending more. If opportunity were very great, however, the opportunist would tend to respond to increasing power by maintaining or even raising its level of collective action up to some point of satiation. For a zealot in the circumstances described by the diagram, an increase in power would make little difference unless there were also a change in the limit set by opportunity. Increasing power would simply make it possible to hold off threats with less collective action. But with great opportunity an increase in the zealot's power would tend inexorably to depress its level of collective action; less and less action would be necessary to achieve its narrowly-defined interest. This unexpected conclusion is gratifying. It provides some assurance that these fearsomely abstract models are not simply an elaborate way of saying the obvious. And the contrast between the zealots and the opportunists lends some insight into the tragic but recurrent victory of opportunists over zealots.

Although these models are relatively complex, they are actually a radical simplification of the realities of collective action. First of all, in terms of the factors discussed earlier, the models only represent the effects of organization and of repression/facilitation indirectly; those factors appear as determinants of the actor's opportunities, mobilization and power, but the models do not specify how they work. As a consequence, they slip past the morale-building, factional struggle, bargaining, recruitment and communication which goes on within any collective action. Second, the models laid out here take interest, opportunity, mobilization and power as both given and independent; in fact, they interact, as when a group mobilizes in response to new threats. Third, the models ignore time completely. They ignore the short run of strategic interaction, in which groups commonly use their mobilization and collective action not only to realize their basic interests, but also to enhance their opportunities and power positions. They also ignore the long run, in which, for example, a long series of unsuccessful collective actions reduces the group's capacity to mobilize for further action -- because the failures both use up the available resources and reduce the willingness of individual members to commit themselves to the collective effort. Finally, these models are entirely quantitative: they have nothing to say about the choices among different kinds of collective action, about the characteristic ways of pursuing different sorts of interests, about the effects of different types of internal organization.

Repertoires of Collective Action

Let us concentrate on the last point. Over the last few centuries, ordinary people have used a remarkable variety of means to act together. If we run forward in time from the era of the Camisards to our own day, we encounter inter-village fights, mocking and retaliatory ceremonies such as *Riding the Stang* and *Katzenmusik*, attacks on tax collectors, petitions, mu-

tinies, solemn assemblies and many other forms of action, most of them now long abandoned, in the early period. As we approach our own time we notice electoral rallies, demonstrations, strikes, attempted revolutions, mass meetings and a great variety of other means, most of them unknown in the time of the Camisards. Now, there are two important things to notice about these forms of action. First, they are forms: learned, understood, sometimes planned and rehearsed by the participants. They are not the "outbursts" and "riots" dear to authorities and crowd psychologists. Second, at a given point in time a particular group of people who shared an interest had only a few of these means at their disposal. At their disposal? The group knew, more or less, how to execute them, had some sense of the likely consequences of employing them, and was capable of identifying some conditions in which it would be both possible and legitimate to use those means. Our women of seventeenth-century Narbonne knew how to attack the tax collector, but they also knew how to assemble and deliberate, how to seize the goods of a baker who overcharged for his bread, how to conduct a charivari. They did not, however, have at their disposal the creation of an association, the launching of a strike, the organization of a demonstration or any number of other means which are commonplace in our own time.

Let us think of the set of means which is effectively available to a given set of people as their repertoire of collective action.¹ The analogy with the repertoires of theater and music is helpful because it emphasizes the learned character of the performances and the limits to that learning, yet allows for variation and even continuous change from one performance to the next. The repertoire of collective action typically leaves plenty of room for improvisation, innovation and unexpected endings. Change in rep-

¹For a much more detailed discussion, see a companion paper: "Repertoires of Contention in America and Britain, 1750-1830".

ertoires occurs through three main processes:

1. the invention or adoption of new means, e.g. the deliberate creation of the "sit-in" by American civil rights workers of the 1950s;
2. the evolution and adaptation of means which are already available, e.g. the way London Radicals expanded the long-established custom of sending a delegation to accompany a petition into mass marches with thousands of supporters for a petition to Parliament;
3. the abandonment of means which have proved inappropriate, ineffective, impractical or dangerous; e.g. the Parisian crowd's abandonment of ritual execution, with the display of traitors' heads on pikes, after the initial years of the Revolution.

This last example identifies one of the difficulties in the serious study of repertoires: how to distinguish a form of action which is in some sense known and available, but is in fact never used because a likely opportunity for its effective use never comes along. The answer must again draw on the analogy with music and theater: if the performer never performs the piece in public or in private we eventually conclude that he has forgotten it, or never knew it. That commonsense rule of thumb has the advantage of confining the study of repertoires to forms of action which real actors have performed, rehearsed, or at least discussed.

Why Study Repertoires?

The study of repertoires provides a splendid opportunity for the joining of the abstract models of collective action we examined earlier to the concrete realities of day-to-day contention. For any particular set of people who share an interest, we may undertake to describe the means of action realistically available to them. In the context of their time, what forms of action did the Protestants of the seventeenth-century Cévennes have at their disposal? What forms did they know, and what forms were feasible? What were the likely costs and consequences of the alternative open to them? Assembling in village councils to petition the Intendant, for example, was a standard procedure of the time, but it was a dangerous and ineffectual way to resist a royal policy as vigorously pursued as the drive against Protestantism. The collective appeal to a powerful patron had worked well in an earlier age, but became less and less feasible as the seventeenth-century French state expanded its range and power. And so on. The inventory of available means of collective action draws us at once into a specification of opportunities, threats, repression, facilitation, power and -- most important -- the relative costs and likely benefits of the array of choices actually confronting the group in question. While it is a long way from that sort of concrete description to the numbers one would need to fill in the diagrams we examined earlier, the concrete description is the first step to a qualitative analysis in the spirit of the rather rationalistic models behind those diagrams. Nor is it necessary to assume that the Camisards, or any other set of collective actors that concerns us, were cool calculators in their own right. In fact, the Camisards had an extraordinary capacity for hysteria, rage, delusion and blind devotion. All that is necessary is a logic of the situation which limits the options, entails some likely costs and consequences for each option, and provides us with enough informa-

tion to begin the reconstruction of the decision rules the participants followed.

If the prevailing repertoire of collective action changes significantly at some point in time, the change is prima facie evidence of a substantial alteration in the structure of power. In France, to take the case I know best, the largest repertoire changes of the last four centuries appear to have occurred around the middle of the seventeenth century and again around the middle of the nineteenth century. The Fronde and the Revolution of 1848 are convenient markers for the shifts in repertoire. At the earlier point, the most visible change was the rapid decline of the classic form of rebellion of some constituted body (a village, a military unit, a trade or something else) which consisted of assembling, deliberating, stating grievances, formally suspending allegiance to the governing authority, choosing a temporary alternate leader, then setting conditions for a return to obedience. In contemporary English, only the word "mutiny" comes close to capturing the character of that old form of rebellion. During the Wars of Religion and the many rebellions of the early seventeenth century, groups of peasants and artisans who rebelled had frequently elected a local noble as their capitaine. That is one reason why, at the end of the seventeenth century, the Intendant of Languedoc scanned the Camisards anxiously to see if they had access to Protestant nobles; a link between Protestant countrymen and the regional nobility was much to be feared. By then, however, that link and that form of rebellion had almost disappeared. The defeat of the Fronde and the seventeenth-century cooptation of the nobility, I believe, played a major part in destroying it. The seventeenth-century rise of royal power and expansion of the state was one of the two or three most important alterations in the structure of power over the last four centuries. A major alteration in the repertoire of popular collective ac-

tion accompanied it.

The nineteenth-century change in the prevailing repertoire of collective action is better documented, and no less dramatic. Around the time of the Revolution of 1848 the tax rebellion consisting of an attack on the collector or his premises went into rapid decline. Although protests of high prices and food shortages continued in other forms, the standard bread riot practically disappeared. So did the charivari and a number of other theatrical displays of contempt or moral disapproval. During the same period, the pre-planned protest meeting, the electoral rally, the demonstration, the strike and a number of related forms were crystallizing and becoming frequent. A great alteration in the repertoire was going on.

Was there a concomitant alteration in the structure of power? I believe there was. It included an emphatic nationalization of politics, a greatly increased role of special-purpose associations, a decline in the importance of communities as the loci of shared interests, a growing importance of organized capital and organized labor as participants in power struggles. As a consequence of these massive changes, the available means of acting together on shared interests changed as well. The same sorts of correlated transformations were occurring elsewhere in western Europe during the nineteenth century: perhaps somewhat earlier in Great Britain, perhaps a bit later in Germany, on varied schedules according to the particular interplay of capitalism and statemaking in one region or another.

Repertoires, Social Movements and Contemporary Collective Action

Mapping and explaining the changes in the collective-action repertoire is an important task, but it is not the task of this paper. The nineteenth-century changes connect with the previous discussion in two important ways. First, the rise of the concept and the reality of the social movement were part of the same transformation. As parties, unions and other associations

specialized in the struggle for power grew in importance, so did the idea and the reality of parallel streams of people, guided by shared interests and beliefs, which overflowed the narrow channels of elections, or labor-management negotiations which were being dug at the same time. Those parallel streams were social movements. Seen from the perspective of national power structures, they were (and are) coherent phenomena; they exist so long as they offer a challenge to dominant interests and beliefs. Seen from the bottom up, they are usually much more fragmented and heterogeneous: shifting factions, temporary alliances, diverse interests, a continuous flux of members and hangers-on.

That duality of perspective accounts for the chronic puzzlement and empirical difficulty experienced by sociologists and historians who seek to study social movements systematically: from the top down, the rise and fall of a movement does normally have a sort of natural history which corresponds less to its own internal logic than to the process by which the national political system shapes, checks and absorbs the challenges which come to it. What is more, the leaders and entrepreneurs of a movement have a strong investment in making it appear to be continuous and coherent. From the bottom up, however, the coincidence of a particular interest, a particular population, a particular set of beliefs and a particular program of action which characterizes a social movement turns out to be quite temporary; when the interest, the population, the beliefs and the program move in different directions -- as they inevitably do -- which of them should the student of social movements follow? So long as we mistakenly think of a social movement as a coherent group rather than as a political product, the problem is insoluble. The solution is to study the collective action of particular groups, and then to ask under what conditions, from the perspective of national centers of power, that collective action appears to form part of a

social movement.

The second important connection between the nineteenth century repertoire changes and the general problems in the analysis of collective action raised earlier in this paper is simply that the nineteenth-century repertoire is still with us today. The strike, the demonstration, the protest meeting and the other forms of action that were novelties then are commonplaces today. As compared with the large alterations in the nineteenth century, the subsequent alterations of repertoire have been relatively minor. To be sure, new forms of terrorism have arisen, demonstrations have motorized, mass media have reshaped our perceptions and our tactics. Set against the disappearance of the food riot, the withering away of satirical street theater or the first flowering of the various forms of action based on special-purpose associations, the twentieth century's additions, subtractions and transformations nevertheless look small.

If that is the case, some valuable conclusions emerge for the student of contemporary collective action. That first emergence of the contemporary repertoire in one part of the world or another deserves close examination. Its timing should tell us a good deal about the timing of more general political changes (including those we sometimes loosely call "political modernization") in different countries. Its particular path and character in a given region should help us understand what sort of power structure was coming into existence, and thereby comprehend the structure within which contention goes on in that region today. The close examination of more recent changes in the prevailing repertoire should assist us in detecting gradual alterations of the political system as a whole. Finally, the student of the collective action of a particular group -- women, farmers, regional minorities, or others -- should gain

plenty of insight from a systematic comparison of the repertoire of that group with the repertoires of other groups within the same national population. At this point, the history and sociology of collective action merge into a common and fruitful enterprise.

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