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## Review of Social Movements: The Structure of Collective Mobilization

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***Social Movements: The Structure of Collective Mobilization.* Paul Almeida. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2019, paper. 224 pp., ISBN 9780520964846**

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*Social Movements* is a highly informative book on the study of Social Movements. The book provides an excellent introduction to the literature regarding the academic study of the topic, bringing together theoretical and empirical insights from the sociology, anthropology, psychology, and political science. The scope of the project is broad which makes the book a valuable starting point for any social scientist. This makes the project especially beneficial to students of social movements, who will gain a practical understanding of the fundamental literature through this accessible book. The book is organized by chapters detailing one aspect of social movement study -- from their emergence to movement outcomes. In addition to covering the breadth of the field, many chapters of the book also trace key literature in the development of the field (especially Chapter 3) and present data in interesting and accessible ways. Each chapter in the book offers instructive examples of the study of real-world social movements using the tools introduced in the book. Another important feature of this work is that the author frequently identifies important gaps in the literature and aspects of social movements that are less understood, making the book promising for new students of social movements.

The first chapter of the book circumscribes the subject of inquiry. Borrowing Tarrow's (2011) definition the book provides social movements as "an excluded collectivity in sustained interaction with economic and political elites seeking social change" (p.6). This definition is highly versatile and may be applied widely to classify or study a range of actors and events. The book emphasizes that this definition includes movements which may use or combine collective action of various types and intensity, including disruptive and violent movements besides conventional ones. In the same chapter Almeida writes that social movements also are characterized by mobilization against some type of threat to the rights of the collective. These ideas are expanded upon in the Social Movement Emergence chapter, research on which suggests that the resource mobilization process and existing organizational infrastructure greatly facilitate the development of social movements.

In the second chapter of the book, How to Study Social Movements, the author provides a highly useful roadmap for how researchers have approached studying social movements. This chapter provides a typology of social movements typically differentiated by their duration and level of organization as well as a short methods section that highlights how researchers have advanced data collection regarding social movements. This includes survey data, observations, and archival data. Particularly interesting is the section on Protest Event Analysis (PEA) which has notably facilitated analysis of protest events as a product of social movements, allowing analysis of the outcomes of protest events as well as changes in protest features over time. PEA also has applications beyond the study of social movements: for example, recent applications have used PEA to analyze police use of force at protests over the years.

Chapter 5 The Framing Process was the chapter I found most interesting. The framing process is the activity which plays a constructivist function in allowing social movement to problematize issues, describe structural inequalities and present the movements platform for addressing these

issues. Almeida cites Snow and Benford (2000), who define collective action frames as devices which simplify and condense the ‘world out there’ – but specifically that mobilize, inspire and garner support (pp. 83-86). Framing is further broken down by Almeida into diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational elements all of which help drive the collective action of social movements. Generally, this elucidates the collective formation of intersubjective meanings in society and the crucial role of social movements in construction of identity and meaning. The end of the chapter also offers a fascinating case study of observing various frames by delving into the meanings of protest songs.

Chapter 8 of the book looks at social movement outcomes. While changes in policy are often attributed to social movement action, this chapter unpacks the literature on factors contributing to social movement success (p.128). The literature suggests that success depends on a variety of factors: the book points out the role of a range of factors from framing strategies and types of infrastructure available to the movement to the role of epistemic communities and elite bargaining. Almeida is careful to point out that movement goals may be sometimes exogenously defined in the study of social movements, as opposed to specific policy outcomes that are part of the movement’s agenda. For some movements, national recognition or active membership may be a goal in and of itself with policy outcomes only gaining importance later.

There are some aspects of the book that I think could be improved. My first point is related to the definition of social movements presented earlier. The definition advances social movements as sustained interactions instigated by an excluded collectivity vying for change in norms of elite and non-elite interactions. In my reading, this definition over-simplifies the construction of interactions to an elite and non-elite dichotomy and over-emphasizes the action of elites compared to other groups. Comparing this definition to Tarrow’s (2011), who posits social movements as “collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities” (p.9). Tarrow’s definition describes the subject-matter more broadly and does not favor any one type of actor. This is important because the former discounts the role of non-elite masses, which can be very resistant to the possibility of changing the status quo and therefore vitally important to explanations related to social movements.

As previously stated, I greatly appreciate the author’s effort to put the audience in the researcher’s role and the use of real-world data and social movements. Some examples of these include the Women’s March (2017-2018), the Occupy Wall Street Protests, and the World Trade Organization protests. The current examples, while important and illustrative, may not fully capture the essence of social movements, which concerns collective action. Therefore, I would encourage the author to employ other types of examples, especially those that use violent tactics. Firstly, this can showcase the versatility of the social movement lens, which has already been applied to the study of rebel Jihadi groups such as the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, who use asymmetric warfare against the Pakistani state (e.g., Feyyaz, 2020). Scholars have also applied framing analysis to so-called “lone-wolves”-- individuals who are inspired to violent action through extremist frames (e.g., Berntzen & Sandberg, 2014). Secondly, this helps place the contentious activities of these organizations (and social movements) in the larger universe of collective action for the audience.

Despite these minor criticisms and suggestions, the book is highly informative and extremely accessible. It provides an excellent starting point for scholars interested in social movements with

respect to both the theory and methods of study. The examples provided do well to shed light on the incredibly deep processes within social movements. Most of all the book is intriguing – encouraging the reader to ask questions and engaging their curiosity for the topic. Simply, Almeida’s work is highly engaging and relevant, making an excellent case for why it is so crucial to continue to study and understand social movements.

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