

PROTEST AND POLITICS

THE PROMISE OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT SOCIETIES

Edited by Howard Ramos
and Kathleen Rodgers



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Contents

Acknowledgments / ix

Introduction: The Promise of Social Movement Societies / 3

HOWARD RAMOS AND KATHLEEN RODGERS

Part 1 Political and Historical Context

1 Reconsidering the Social Movement Society in the
New Century / 21

DAVID S. MEYER AND AMANDA PULLUM

2 Evangelical Radio: Institution Building and the
Religious Right / 44

TINA FETNER, ALLYSON STOKES, AND CARRIE B. SANDERS

3 The Social Movement Society and the Human Rights State / 61

DOMINIQUE CLÉMENT

4 Institutionalization, State Funding, and Advocacy in the Quebec
Women's Movement / 79

DOMINIQUE MASSON

Part 2 State Dynamics and Processes

- 5 How the State Shapes Social Movements: An Examination of the Environmental Movement in Canada / 101
CATHERINE CORRIGALL-BROWN AND MABEL HO
- 6 Immigrant Collective Mobilization and Socio-economic Integration in Canada / 118
PHILIPPE COUTON
- 7 Uncooperative Movements, Militarized Policing, and the Social Movement Society / 138
LESLEY WOOD

Part 3 How People Participate

- 8 Social Movement Communities in the Movement Society / 155
SUZANNE STAGGENBORG
- 9 No to Protests, Yes to Festivals: How the Creative Class Organizes in the Social Movement Society / 173
JUDITH TAYLOR
- 10 Justification and Critique in the Social Movement Society / 191
JIM CONLEY
- 11 The Concept of Social Movement and Its Relationship to the Social Movement Society: An Empirical Investigation / 208
DAVID B. TINDALL AND JOANNA L. ROBINSON

Part 4 Knowledge and Culture

- 12 Alternative Policy Groups and Global Civil Society: Networks and Discourses of Counter-Hegemony / 233
WILLIAM K. CARROLL
- 13 Wilderness Revisited: Canadian Environmental Movements and the Eco-Politics of Special Places / 255
MARK C.J. STODDART
- 14 Alberta Internalizing Oil Sands Opposition: A Test of the Social Movement Society Thesis / 274
RANDOLPH HALUZA-DELAY

Conclusion: What We Can Say about the Promise of Social
Movement Societies / 297

KATHLEEN RODGERS AND HOWARD RAMOS

References / 308

List of Contributors / 347

Index / 352

Introduction

The Promise of Social Movement Societies

HOWARD RAMOS AND KATHLEEN RODGERS

Scholars, pundits, and policymakers have for many years lamented the steady decline in voter turnout in democratic countries around the world (Putnam 2000; Dalton 2002). Such trends have been documented in many advanced industrial societies, including the United States, the European Union, and Japan. Canada has been no exception. In the 2011 federal election, voter turnout was just 61.4 percent, which was up only slightly from the previous election, which set a record for the lowest rate in the nation's history. This is a far cry from the 79.4 percent turnout in the 1958 federal election (CBC News 2011) and is a sign of serious problems with the country's democratic political institutions. But to assume from these data that people are becoming either less political or apathetic would be incorrect. In fact, one doesn't have to look far to see the spread of contention and politics by other means around the world.

The "Arab Spring" saw unprecedented demonstrations across the Middle East and a sea change of power, with rulers in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen forced out of their positions. Contention spread throughout the region and has had long-lasting effects. The anti-austerity protests that swept across Europe are also evidence of the spread of such contentious politics. The Greek protests and the Spanish *Indignados* show that people are indeed still very political. The rise of the Occupy Movement, moreover, which spread from Canada to Wall Street and then the rest of the world, with

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protests in at least twenty-three different countries and all continents except Antarctica, is yet again evidence of politics by other means, as were the Quebec student movement (the “Maple Spring”) or the unexpected rise and prominence of Idle No More. Such widespread mobilization has led some to claim that the transnational spread of protest during the 2010s rivals that of the late 1960s (Sidney Tarrow interview, in Stewart 2011). If that is indeed true, people are by no means politically apathetic. Instead, their discontent is increasingly expressed outside dominant institutions.

At the same time, states have begun to incorporate extra-institutional politics into their everyday operations. It has become standard practice for municipalities, politicians, and police forces to accommodate protesters by issuing permits for protest, setting up zones for demonstrations, and even offering resources for organizing dissent. This has led some to claim that public demonstrations have become so common that they are “a routine part of political bargaining” (Jenkins, Wallace, and Fullerton 2008, 12). The use of subpolitics rather than engagements with representative democracy and traditional avenues of party politics has been on the rise (Beck 1992; Castells 2004). This has meant that states and mainstream political actors regularly reach out to movements, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and advocacy groups in their consultations, deliberations, and development of policies (Buček and Smith 2000). In effect, protest and contentious politics have become regularized.

Social Movement Society Thesis

David Meyer and Sidney Tarrow (1998) accounted for many of these trends by arguing that advanced democracies were becoming a “social movement society” (SMS). They observed that mobilization had changed from risky, contentious, and outside-of-the-state in the 1960s to predictable, accommodating, and partially incorporated into the state by the 1990s. More specifically, they raised three hypotheses, which we refer to as the “SMS thesis”: (1) social protest moved from being a sporadic to a perpetual feature of contemporary life; (2) contentious action is more common and is used by a wider range of social actors; and (3) professionalization and institutionalization of social movements place them in the realm of conventional politics (Meyer and Tarrow 1998, 4).

Since their initial theorization of the concept, over 380 articles (according to Google Scholar at the time this chapter was being written) have cited their work, and many researchers have expanded upon the SMS thesis to

add a fourth dimension: the institutionalization of state responses to social movements and protests in particular (Soule and Earl 2005, 346). Others have empirically examined the thesis and arrived at mixed results (e.g., Rucht and Neidhardt 2002; McAdam et al. 2005; Soule and Earl 2005; Jenkins, Wallace, and Fullerton 2008), sparking ongoing interest in seeing how the SMS thesis fits now, more than fifteen years later – in a context characterized by new waves of mobilization in the wake of the Great Recession.

During the spring of 2012, we organized a workshop in Ottawa, inviting scholars from across Canada and the United States to engage the SMS thesis. The goal of the workshop, and now this book, was to revisit the SMS thesis with new analysis and data to see whether it is still applied and to see what insights could be gleaned from Canadian movements in order to understand the relationships between movements and mainstream politics. We believe that this is an important endeavour as austerity measures have meant widespread cuts to social programs and a reshaping of contemporary politics. The goal of this edited collection of essays is thus not to provide a comprehensive examination of social movements in Canada but rather to see what Canadian social movements and scholars can contribute towards an understanding of the possibilities and realities of a social movement society.

Possibilities and Realities

As the Arab Spring, anti-austerity protests, *Indignados*, the Occupy Movement, the Maple Spring, and Idle No More all show, Meyer and Tarrow's argument (1998) still has much merit when trying to understand recent politics. The cases show that a *diffusion* of actions and movements has occurred in contemporary politics; that contentious tactics, as well as social movements, are more common; and that they tend to reach further – beyond the scope of locales or states – than they did decades ago. In addition, the cases show that the *form* of politics and movements has begun to change, with social movements, NGOs, and advocacy groups blending with mainstream political organizations to evoke change. This is seen with the toppling of dictators in the case of the Arab Spring, and, arguably, with the launching of the discourse of the 2012 US presidential election in the case of the Occupy Movement. As a consequence of both diffusion and changing forms of mobilization, the *institutionalization* of social movements and contentious politics has occurred. This has meant that movements have greater

access to mainstream institutions, while at the same time those institutions are increasingly shaped by the subpolitics that surround them. Canada and its social movements appear to fit similar patterns of diffusion, form, and institutionalization. In fact, as a country, it has been an ideal-type case of a social movement society.

Widespread social movements and protest are far from new. In Canada one can readily cite as examples the social gospel and reform movement of the 1890s and early twentieth century, or the second wave of the temperance movement that influenced the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada after the First World War, or the first wave of the women's movement that swept the world in the early twentieth century. During the post-Second World War period, however, and especially since the mid-1960s and 1970s, Canada has seen the rise of a wide range of social movements that have played a significant role in nation building (Pal 1993). Canada's Indigenous movements, for example, rose to prominence after widespread protest in 1969, laying the groundwork for the development of many national Indigenous organizations in the 1970s, including the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and the Native Women's Association of Canada.¹ Indigenous organizations were not alone. During the same period, numerous influential Canadian social movements and advocacy organizations rose to prominence. The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), Greenpeace, and the Gay Alliance Toward Equality are just a sampling of organizations founded during this period.² In fact, the 1970s may have been a far more important decade for Canadian social movements and advocacy groups than the 1960s. The timing and spread of contention certainly fit the SMS model of diffusion.

Canada is an interesting case study because although these organizations participated in protest tactics and supported activists, many were also founded in part because of funds distributed by the Canadian Secretary of State, which aided pure advocacy organizations (see Pal 1993, 7), as well as other federal ministries (see Clément 2008a; Rodgers and Knight 2011). A prominent example can be seen in the founding of the Company of Young Canadians (CYC) in 1966 with the support of the federal government (Dickerson and Campbell 2008, 3), which in turn led some to label the group "government funded hell-raisers" (Brushett 2009, 247). Such practices continued into the 1970s and were amplified with the promotion of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's vision of creating a "just society." Much Canadian social justice mobilization has thus largely, despite some exceptions, been dependent on resources and opportunities provided by the state

in an effort to build citizenship and the nation (Pal 1993). Again we find evidence for the SMS argument, where the form of mobilization has been blurred between those acting inside and outside of the state. As a result, although early mobilizing occurred during the 1960s and earlier (see Palaeologu 2009 for an edited volume on the decade), the 1970s were important because they were a decade of growth, prosperity, and opportunity for social justice organizations.

The Canadian state has been an important source of funding and opportunities for movements and social justice groups. As Lipset (1986, 1990) has argued, Canadians are less averse to collectiveness and the state than Americans.³ This has meant that they are less likely to engage in voluntary activity, and in turn participate in a true civil society that is independent of state intervention. It has also meant that many organizations, as can be seen with the Indigenous, women's, and human rights movements, have depended on the federal government for "core funding" of their operations. In many respects, during the 1970s the government was anxious to avoid social unrest caused by unemployed baby boomers and funded a surge of new programs designed for students and youth. Programs such as the CYC, Opportunities for Youth (OFY), and the Local Initiative Program (LIP) served two functions: funding or creating social justice initiatives and offering jobs to young Canadians. The institutionalization of movements and the blurring of politics is clearly seen in how young, government-funded, organizations engaged political opportunities around nation building.

The process of patriating Canada's Constitution during the early 1980s sparked the emergence of unprecedented political opportunities for social movements, advocacy groups, and others seeking social justice (Pal 1993). The federal government openly solicited input from Indigenous organizations, the women's movement, and countless other interest groups. Miriam Smith (2005a, 146) argues that "prior to the 1982 Constitution, legal opportunities were limited for interest groups and social movements." In fact, Section 15 of the Constitution recognized "equal rights," offering new opportunities for mobilization around race, religion, sex, and ability, and leading to a questioning of the lack of protections and rights for many others, such as the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) communities. In her other work Smith (2005b, 2007) notes that the Constitution was the basis of much mobilization by LGBT organizations in the 1980s and 1990s. It was also central to the success of the movement in gaining recognition of same-sex marriage in 2005 through the Civil Marriage Act. The same section also played a key role in the lobbying for an apology by

Japanese Canadians interned during the Second World War and led to the founding of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation. The Constitution has played such a central role in Canadian social justice mobilization that conservatives lament that its use by movement organizations has led to a “Charter revolution” in which the Supreme Court has become activist and overly influenced by “special interests” (Morton and Knopff 2000). Since patriation, the Constitution has been used by those concerned with the access to and the right to abortion, Indigenous rights, LGBT rights, bilingualism, and prisoner voting. It is a central tool for social justice.

During this period, the Canadian state even promoted the use of the courts by social movement and advocacy organizations. This can be seen through the funding of the Court Challenges Program (CCP) between 1985 and 1992 and then again between 1994 and 2006, to provide financial assistance and support for cases dealing with equity rights under the Constitution. As Bashevkin (1996, 229) found, many feminists credited the program with the successes of NAC during its peak years of prominence in the late 1980s. The program was also important in the same-sex marriage fight in the 2000s as seen through its use by Egale, one of Canada’s leading LGBT organizations; in turn, the CCP sought out Egale’s expertise in preparation of Case Development Reports and legal analyses of decisions (Egale Canada 2011). As a result, unlike in other countries, where close ties between mainstream political institutions and movements has been lamented as a form of co-optation (Piven and Cloward 1979), this has not been the case in Canada. From the very outset, Canadian movements and social justice organizations have tended to rely on the state for their very existence, and they were given room to challenge the state and promote social change. The state, moreover, has depended on movements and NGOs to help deliver services and build a Canadian nation that is distinct from others – one that is socially just.

This historical trajectory of the relationship between the Canadian state and civil society actors clearly fits the main propositions of the SMS thesis. It is less clear, however, whether this relationship will continue into the future. Neoliberal policies took root in the late 1980s and have only become more prominent since. As a result, the relationship between advocacy groups and the federal government became increasingly antagonistic. Core funding to organizations was increasingly scrutinized and the cabinet position of the Secretary of State ended in 1996. The responsibilities for funding advocacy organizations were dispersed to other ministries and have increasingly

diminished, leading to a true attack on the interdependence between organizations and the state in recent years.

As Sylvia Bashevkin (2009, 137) notes, with respect to the women's movement, in 2006 the federal government cut the budget of Status of Women Canada, a federal agency overseen by the Minister for Status of Women, by \$5 million, or about a fifth of its budget at the time. Similar cuts were seen in other government agencies and affected a wide range of organizations. The fate of the Canadian women's movement is so precarious that as we write the once-prominent NAC, which hosted national election leadership debates in 1984 (Bashevkin 1996, 219), no longer even maintains a website. As one representative of a women's organization commented in this context: "After all of the assaults we have suffered over the years with the chipping away at the funding and program mandates and all of that, this was like the axe in the chest ... you just felt the collective wind being knocked out of us ... it was a palpable feeling of defeat" (Rodgers and Knight 2011).

In 2006, the Conservative government continued to cement neoliberal policies that were promoted by previous governments in the 1990s and 2000s, and ultimately cut funding to the CCP. This again affected the promotion of women's rights, and was followed by a range of attacks on social justice organizations more generally. In 2012, for instance, the federal government introduced restrictions to the ability of charitable foundations to fund political activities. The government also increased sanctions against charities that do not comply with the "10 percent rule," which mandates that no more than that amount can be used for political advocacy by a given charity (Waldie 2012). This now means that charities have to be cautious about formally supporting well-known direct action groups like Greenpeace or advocacy groups like Amnesty International for fear of sanctions.

The Conservative government also attacked NGOs critical of its policies. The Minister of Natural Resources, for instance, attacked Tides Canada, a Vancouver-based charity, when it opposed the Northern Gateway pipeline, and the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration attacked No One Is Illegal, which defends the rights of temporary foreign workers and illegal migrants. The situation has gotten so bad that it even led long-time and famed environmentalist David Suzuki to leave the board of the charity bearing his name to avoid undermining its work in the wake of Conservative bullying (S. McCarthy and Moore 2012). Other organizations, such as ForestEthics, which targeted the Canadian energy industry by encouraging large US firms to avoid the use of fuel derived from Alberta oil sands, have

opted to give up their charitable status in order to ensure their ability to take a critical stance towards the federal government.

Public support for advocacy organizations also appears to be falling. The 2006 decision to cut funding to the CCP was met with little public outcry, and recent national polling shows that one of the most popular 2012 federal budget items was the requirement that charities provide more information on their political activities and their funding by foreign sources. Eighty percent of Canadians voiced their support of these policies (Brennan 2012). Polling by Nanos Research for the *Globe and Mail* and *La Presse* (Mackrael 2011), however, found that 58 percent of Canadians who were aware of the Occupy Movement protests were favourable or somewhat favourable towards them. What do these conflicting patterns mean for the SMS argument?

We believe that trends witnessed in the Canadian case provide opportunities to refine the SMS position in at least three areas. First, Canadian mobilization raises questions about the timing of the emergence of an SMS. Second, the Canadian case also raises questions about the usefulness of the social movement literature's treatment of movements as unique and separate from other forms of politics. The SMS argument notes a recent blurring of political space, but we believe that this is an artefact of much of the literature rather than a historical fact. Last, the Canadian case calls into question the notion of a singular social movement society, versus plural social movement societies. One of the reasons Canada invested in legislating equity policies and building its civil society as a part of nation building was the threat of Quebec nationalism. Likewise, the changes Canadians are witnessing with respect to social justice in the country reflect the regionalism of Canada and the rise of Alberta-based politics associated with extreme neoliberal policies. They do not reflect the significant differences seen in attitudes and actions in British Columbia, Ontario, or Quebec, which have all seen much mobilization in recent years. They also do not reflect the increasingly transnational ties that foster mobilization. Let us briefly elaborate on each of these observations.

Timing

Although Meyer and Tarrow (1998) popularized the notion of social movement society and used it to understand the changes from the 1960s to the new century, one can cite the acceptance and spread of widespread mobilization in earlier times. As we noted above, the social gospel and reform movement, the temperance movement, and the first wave of the women's

movement all point to elements of a social movement society long before the end of the twentieth century. Others, such as Rucht and Neidhardt (2002, 7), moreover, claim to have used the concept with caution much earlier than Meyer and Tarrow. They also cite similar concepts by Etzioni (1970) (“demonstration democracy”) or Pross (1992) (“protest society”) as evidence of earlier realizations that protest had become a feature of routine politics. These observations parallel the comments by Jenkins and colleagues (2008) cited above but came almost thirty years earlier. In their reflection on the state and emergence of the social movement literature McAdam and colleagues (2005, 2) note that one of its deficiencies has been its tendency to be ahistorical, which the comparison to Etzioni (1970) and Jenkins and colleagues (2008) accentuate. McAdam and colleagues (2005) also note that the social movement literature has tended to focus on disruptive politics in public settings, national campaigns, urban-based protest, and struggles by disenfranchised groups. Their analyses of contentious action in and around Chicago show that such a focus misses much of the mobilization that goes on. Some of this suggests that the Canadian case may not be so exceptional after all, and that the roots of the SMS came earlier than originally thought. The historical applicability of the SMS thesis thus warrants further investigation.

Political Space

Others have shown that the blurring of political action and form, from protests outside the mainstream system to lobbying inside it, has been a feature of most modern politics. The social movement literature’s tendency to denote a unique space separate from other forms of politics does little to advance our understanding of social change, and instead does more to advance the careers of those in the area. That said, many contributors to the social movement literature have shown how different tactics and forms of mobilization are often interrelated. Haines (1995), for instance, showed that the radical actions of more militant African American activists in the 1960s benefited the more moderate organizations of the period and even led to increased financial support for them. Suzanne Staggenborg (1998) showed the importance of culture and communities in women’s mobilization, especially in periods of abeyance or when political opportunities do not promote mobilization. And the resource mobilization approach introduced by McCarthy and Zald (1977) focused on professionalization, entrepreneurs, and resources. It didn’t highlight chequebook activism per se, but certainly showed that many advocates of social change participate through

formally organized institutions of civil society. As Goldstone (2004) rightly notes, much mobilization has been by groups of influence and not the disenfranchised. He shows a strong relationship between the growth of normal democratic politics and social movements, leading one to ask whether in fact social movements are synonymous with democracy. This might account for why Corrigan-Brown (2012) found that two-thirds of Americans in her analysis claim to have belonged to a social movement organization. Again, we find that the Canadian case is not unique and that these observations both support the SMS model and contradict it. They are the outcome observed in the SMS thesis, but they are far from new or the end result of a move from radical to institutionalized politics. Again we find a point for further elaboration. The blurring of political action and form has likely existed as long as groups have become political.

Social Movement Societies – Plural

Something that may be somewhat unique to the Canadian case is the extent to which one might think of social movement societies – plural rather than singular. This is in part because much of the mobilization witnessed in the country in the postwar period, especially during the 1960s and beyond, has been linked to Canadian nation-state building (Pal 1993). While the notion of a “just society” was advocated by Pierre Trudeau as early as his first election campaign to become prime minister in 1968, it is equally tied to threats against the Canadian state. As Soule and Earl (2005) note, mobilization and the SMS thesis are inherently linked to the political context examined. If one is to take that seriously, with respect to the Canadian case it is paramount for one to account for the role of Quebec and Quebec nationalism in the building of social movement societies within the country. Clément (2008a) has noted rightly that much of the work on Canadian mobilization has ignored francophone insights. One must also account for the ongoing role of colonization with respect to First Nations and the fact that Canada is an officially multicultural society. All of these have meant that mobilization and political action and form have largely been regional, and much has been identity-based. This can be seen in the widespread protests by Quebec students in 2012. It can also be seen in the province’s continued election of separatist or left-of-centre federal parties. And it can be seen in the continued success of many movements in that province when they are threatened elsewhere. The ongoing strength and prominence of the *Fédération des femmes du Québec* (FFQ) is just one example.

The importance of new information technology, such as the Internet and social media and their widespread use in Canada, has also meant that mobilization is increasingly transnational. This is amplified by the large number of diaspora communities living in the country. It has meant that Canada, to use the language of Tarrow (2005), is filled with “rooted cosmopolitans” who act in the name of foreign causes within the country and also support them from abroad. One can readily point to Tamil immigrants who shut down the Gardiner Expressway, a major highway running through Toronto, in 2009 to protest the harsh repression of their people in Sri Lanka (Jeyapal 2013). The importance of the Internet and social media in mobilization can also account for the role that Vancouver-based Adbusters played in sparking the Occupy movement and the rapid spread of Idle No More. It also partially accounts for some of the contradictions found between, on the one hand, high levels of support for mobilization and, on the other, approval of cuts to state funding of organizations and the role they play in mainstream politics. That is, we live in an era of media, political, and cultural solitude – what David Meyer and Amanda Pullum call silos (see Chapter 1). We may in fact communicate, challenge power, and appreciate identities around one another with fewer chances to engage one another.

For at least these three reasons (timing, political space, and societies in the plural), we believe it is important to critically ask whether Canada fits the SMS thesis and whether the country can be used as a case to extend and refine the SMS argument. We also believe that the SMS thesis should be engaged in the Canadian context because of the rapid changes in relationships between social movements, advocacy groups, and the Canadian state witnessed in recent years. Only with analysis and systematic engagement can those changes be fully understood.

An Outline of This Book

Many of the chapters in this volume expand upon our insights on the timing of the SMS argument, the theorizing of political space, and the notion of social movement societies, plural rather than singular. They also expound on the SMS thesis, test its assumptions, and contribute to social movement theory by identifying mechanisms of social movement societies and approaches to understanding contemporary mobilization. The goal of this book is to assess the SMS thesis, and this is done by looking at four issues: (1) the role of political and historical context; (2) the dimensions of state and movement dynamics and processes; (3) how people participate in

contentious politics; and (4) the role of the production of knowledge and culture.

The first chapter consists of David Meyer and Amanda Pullum's reflections on the SMS thesis. Like us, they recognize that much has changed since Meyer and Tarrow initially conceived it. They pay special attention to the rise of nativist, fundamentalist, and conservative identity-based movements, as well as the rapid rise of Web 2.0 technology or changes in mass communication, and the costs and consequences of institutionalizing mobilization in changing both movement and mainstream politics. They examine these issues through a discussion of American populism and the Tea Party and Occupy movements. Many of their insights accord well with other chapters in the volume. Others, such as Tina Fetner, Allyson Stokes, and Carrie Sanders in Chapter 2 or Philippe Couton in Chapter 6, recognize the role of nativist politics and populism. The role of new technologies is engaged by Jim Conley in Chapter 10 and Mark Stoddart in Chapter 13, and institutionalization is analyzed by Dominique Clément in Chapter 3, Dominique Masson in Chapter 4, and Catherine Corrigan-Brown and Mabel Ho in Chapter 5. Chapter 1 thus offers an ideal point of entry into the role of historical and social context as well as the other chapters of this book.

The political and institutional history of mobilization is examined further in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. All three chapters show that the existence of social movement societies spans a greater period than the 1960s generation, and that the relationship between movements and states can be more complicated than the asymmetrical and confrontational position identified by many social movement scholars. The religious right in Canada and the United States is examined by Fetner, Stokes, and Sanders in Chapter 2. Through comparative analysis, they look at the influence of historical forces on social movements and the role of the institutional infrastructure of media on mobilization. More specifically, they show how larger media organizations, reaching a wider audience and with less restrictive policies, benefited the American religious right, compared with the narrower field of media in Canada, where the religious right saw less success. In Chapter 3, Clément also offers a historical account of mobilization, looking at the human rights movement in British Columbia. He shows how the women's movement and human rights activists were key players in the development of what he calls the "human rights state." They were important actors in the creation of policies, laws, and sections of the Constitution – all of which show that movements and NGOs are important subpolitical actors. They both influence states and are looked upon by states to implement and

develop policy. The relationship between movements and the state is examined yet further by Masson in Chapter 4. She too looks at the women's movement, but focuses on Quebec. In doing so, she shows, like Fetner and colleagues and Clément, that historical and political forces shape the mobilization of movements even as movements shape those forces. She argues that it is essential for social movement scholars, and those looking at social movement societies in particular, to revise their understanding of the relationship between movements and states. The relationship is by no means one-sided, and movements are important political actors.

The relationship between movements and the state is examined further in Part 2, "State Dynamics and Processes." The chapters in this part show, as we have argued, that the political space of the SMS thesis needs expanding. In Chapter 5, Corrigan-Brown and Ho look at the role of state funding in the Canadian environmental movement. They expand upon some of the insights offered by Masson and others in Part 1, on political and historical context and the role of government funding. More specifically, they compare the media activism of the World Wildlife Fund and Greenpeace before and after changes in government and recent cuts to funding for environmental groups. They show that the organizations had different responses, pointing to the need to look not only at context but also at the properties of organizational actors. Their chapter is followed by Philippe Couton's analysis of immigrant mobilization and socio-economic integration in Chapter 6. The role of immigrants in politics has been receiving increasing attention. Arguably, changing demographics as a result of immigration are shifting the way in which politics are conducted worldwide. Couton, moreover, changes the focus of social movement outcomes from direct political changes in mainstream institutions to how mobilization also shapes economic power. In doing so, he expands the analysis of SMS from looking at the relationship between movements and states to looking at movements and broader forms of power. As with the other chapters in Part 2, Lesley Wood's focus in Chapter 7 is on the relationship between movements and the state. She looks at the diffusion of a dual model of policing protests in the post-9/11 context. Her chapter challenges the nature of social movement societies – it finds that although protest is possibly becoming routinized, it is by no means less radical, and the relationship between some activists and the police is increasingly suspicious.

How people participate in social movement societies is examined in the chapters of Part 3. In Chapter 8, Suzanne Staggenborg synthesizes a number of the insights of the earlier chapters by looking at the role of social

movement communities in the SMS argument. Like Fetner, Stokes, and Sanders, she argues that it is important to consider the prefigurative elements that support movements, and like Masson and Corrigan-Brown and Ho she contemplates the role states play in those communities. She does this by comparing the World March of Women in Quebec with G-20 protests in Pittsburgh. She argues that social movement scholars need to move beyond merely counting and documenting protests to also consider the conditions that induce them. Judith Taylor follows this in Chapter 9 with an analysis of a local movement against dirty diesel trains in Toronto. She assesses how and why local activists participate in everyday mobilization, and theorizes why many prefer “gentle activism” or “contention in disguise” rather than more overt and radical action. In Chapter 10, Jim Conley examines these issues further by introducing concepts of French pragmatic sociology. Specifically, he shows how people escalate grievances along orders of worth, moving analysis beyond more simplistic frames of injustice. His analysis effectively shows, moreover, how Web 2.0 is used in the negotiation of a local grievance in Toronto between a cyclist and a driver. It shows, like the other chapters in Part 3 and our own observation, that the SMS thesis demands more complex notions of both movements and societies. Similar arguments are made by David Tindall and Joanna Robinson in Chapter 11. They question how “membership” in movements is understood and analyzed. Specifically, they examine whether or not it is safe to assume that belonging to an organization is the same as being active in public protests. In doing so, they empirically test one of the main claims of Meyer and Tarrow’s initial SMS thesis (1998) – that activism is becoming more common and widespread.

Part 4 looks at how people participate; it does so contemplating the role of knowledge and culture and how it factors into the SMS argument. The chapters here go beyond our look at societies, plural, in the SMS by offering insight into how culture shapes those societies. These chapters accord well with earlier chapters that look into what generates social movement societies, such as Clément looking at subpolitics, Masson looking at relations, or Staggenborg’s consideration of communities. In Chapter 12, William Carroll analyzes the scale of the SMS and looks at how knowledge production is generated among organizations of the global North and South. He looks at how organizations make claims and generate counter-hegemonic information. In Chapter 13, Mark Stoddart looks at the cultural work of two local environmental movements in British Columbia and Nova Scotia. Like Staggenborg, he urges social movement scholars to step outside of

their usual spaces of analysis – national movements and “factual” counts of mobilization. In Chapter 14, Randolph Haluza-DeLay also looks at the cultural work of movements. Examining how environmentalists frame their mobilization and Albertan identity, he shows the importance of looking at challenging socio-hegemonic norms in addition to focusing on institutional changes.

We wrap up the book in the Conclusion by revisiting the SMS argument and considering how our collective work contributes to the promise of social movement societies. It is our hope that you will find the chapters in this edited collection both thought-provoking and useful to your work.

Notes

- 1 The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples was originally founded in 1971 as the Native Council of Canada. It currently represents Indigenous peoples living off Indian reserves. The Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami was founded in 1971 as the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada. It represents Inuit peoples living in Northern Canada. The Native Women’s Association of Canada was founded in 1973 and represents Indigenous women.
- 2 Interestingly, all three organizations were founded in 1971.
- 3 He is not without his critics. See, for example, Baer, Grabb, and Johnston 1990.