This lively textbook integrates theory and methodology into the study of social movements, and includes contemporary case studies to engage students and encourage them to apply theories critically. A wide range of protest cases are explored, from American, European, and global arenas, including contemporary examples of political violence and terrorism, alter-globalization, social networking, and global activism. Key chapter features encourage students to engage critically with the material: method points uncover the methodology behind the theories, helping students to understand the larger study of social movements; debate points highlight classic arguments in social movement studies, encouraging students to critically assess theoretical approaches; and case studies connect theories to cases, allowing students to relate key principles to real-world examples. A companion website offers additional student and instructor resources, including lecture slides and worksheets.

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Key Topics in Sociology

This series of textbooks surveys key topics in the study of sociology. Books cover the main theoretical and empirical aspects of each topic in a clear, concise but sophisticated style, and relate the topic to wider sociological debates. Titles are useful to undergraduates studying a first course on the topic, as well as graduates approaching the subject for the first time. Designed for ease of use, instructors may teach from individual books, or select a collection from the series for a broader sociology course.

Forthcoming Titles

Suki Ali, The Sociology of Race and Ethnicity
Kate Nash, The Sociology of Human Rights
For Jason
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Preface

Social Movements and Protest introduces social science students to the shifting terrain of ‘social movement studies’, providing them with a chronology of the field and bringing them up to date with conceptual developments. The book is first and foremost for students studying at the undergraduate level. It aims to encourage them to critically engage with the different ways in which social movements have been conceptualized and researched, and to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches. The book argues that critical developments in the field have moved in the direction of a ‘relational approach’ to social movements, which it draws out and supports across the various chapters. It also argues that by engaging with ‘new cases and new contexts’ – ranging from lifestyle movements and terrorism, to globalization, new media, and protest in authoritarian regimes – we can stretch and problematize existing conceptualizations of social movements in ways that force us to rethink ‘what social movements are’. In this respect, the book raises four main issues: the necessity of strains, resources, and organization; the centrality of the state; the desirability of collective identity; and the distinction between ‘unorganized, individual action’ and ‘organized, collective action’.

Unlike other introductory accounts of social movement studies, the book takes an integrative approach to the discussion of theoretical approaches, research methodologies, and case studies. By including methodological discussions alongside theoretical ones, the aim is to prepare students to study social movements themselves. The distinctive features of the book are as follows:

- It traces and critically engages with different ways of conceptualizing ‘social movements’ and ‘protest’.
- It introduces students to methodological debates alongside theoretical ones.
- It draws upon ‘new cases and new contexts’ to problematize existing conceptualizations of social movements (‘new’ not just in terms of contemporary developments – like new media – but ‘newly considered topics’ in social movement studies – like terrorism).
It offers conceptual developments by exploring unorganized, individual protest that takes place outside social movement organizations (SMOs) (the concept of ‘misbehaviour’).

Looking at protest activity outside SMOs and embedded in people’s everyday lives is an important corrective in a field that widely recognizes a bias towards ‘organized’ forms of action and ‘public’ protest events. The book aims to rework conceptualizations of social movements and protest to enable these different forms to come into view by shifting our sights from ‘collective behaviour to misbehaviour’. The desire is not to leave ‘collective’ action behind in preference for individualized ‘life politics’, but to better understand the forms and strategies of collective efforts to change things that lie outside the normal vision of mobilization theories and contentious politics. The book does this by drawing upon the work of theorists like James Scott and John Holloway, and committing the social movement theorists’ old trick of borrowing concepts from organizational studies, in this case the concept of ‘misbehaviour’ (Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999).

As it is written expressly for students, there are a variety of features to aid learning. Each chapter contains four reflection ‘points’, which include: case points, presenting interesting case studies; debate points, engaging with famous controversies; methods points, exploring the methodological challenges of different approaches; and discussion points, posing questions for wider reflection. These features are aimed at fostering critical engagement with the material presented. There are also suggestions for where to begin further reading. For the teacher of social movements, the chapters provide a useful starting point for a course of lectures, and offer concise summaries of existing literature and theoretical perspectives. Online material further supports the book for teaching purposes.

There are a number of people to acknowledge, first among them, the students on my course ‘Power and Protest’ at the University of Manchester, UK from 2008 to 2013, whose lively debates in class have allowed me to experiment with different ways of explaining theories, and have forced me to be as clear as possible in explication and, as much as possible, to leave the jargon behind. Hopefully, the style in which I present theoretical approaches in this book reflects their demands for clarity, although I suspect some jargon has inevitably crept in. I must also acknowledge the Manchester Social Movements Group – especially
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Abbreviations

AGM    alternative globalization movement
CB     collective behaviour
CBDM   consensus-based decision-making
CP     contentious politics
MNC    multinational corporation
MTT    McAdam, Tilly, and Tarrow (2001), *Dynamics of Contention*
NSM    new social movement
POS    political opportunity structure
PPM    political process model
PPT    political process theory
RAT    rational action theory
RMT    resource mobilization theory
SMI    social movement industry
SMO    social movement organization
SMS    social movement sector
SNA    social network analysis
WTO    World Trade Organization