



The Politics of Collective Violence

Charles Tilly, Sidney Tarrow, Douglas McAdam

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Are there any commonalities between such phenomena as soccer hooliganism, sabotage by peasants of landlords' property, road rage, and even the events of September 11? With striking historical scope and command of the literature of many disciplines, this book seeks the common causes of these events in collective violence. In collective violence, social interaction immediately inflicts physical damage, involves at least two perpetrators of damage, and results in part from coordination among the persons who perform the damaging acts. Charles Tilly argues that collective violence is complicated, changeable, and unpredictable in some regards, yet also results from similar causes variously combined in different times and places. Pinpointing the causes, combinations, and settings helps to explain collective violence and also helps to identify the best ways to mitigate violence and create democracies with a minimum of damage to persons and property. Charles Tilly is the Joseph L. Buttenwieser Professor of Social Science at Columbia University. He has published more than twenty scholarly books, including twenty specialized monographs and edited volumes on political processes, inequality, population change and European history.

The Politics of Collective Violence Details

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From Reader Review The Politics of Collective Violence for online ebook

Margaret Sankey says

Sociologist Charles Tilly attempts to categorize violence in societies of high/low capacity and democratic/undemocratic features across a spectrum of violent rituals (lynchings, public shaming, soccer hooligans), coordinated destruction (pogroms, genocide, purges), opportunism (looting, piracy), brawls (riots, bar fights, road rage), scattered attacks (sabotage, Luddites) and broken negotiations (protection rackets, extortion, threats), with vivid examples from historical accounts and contemporary conflicts. Tilly then suggests the points at which violence erupted because systems of control of boundaries broke down allowing people who previously had lived peacefully together to turn on one another.

J.M. Hushour says

Tilly is always so refreshing to read because he openly, brazenly refuses to come to any but the most hesitant of conclusions on his work. What he presents here are some new ways of charting collective violence and attempting to discern common features between some of them. He uses brawls, rituals, gang violence, protection rackets and other forms of violent action to tease out the common denominators, the roles of governments and/or other state-sanctioned actors, and individuals. A nice introductory discussion to understanding non-warfare types of violence.

Colin says

The subject of study is collective violence, and how to explain and categorize its various forms. The basic dimensions of comparison for these types of violent collective action are the level of coordination and level of salience of violence.

The categories:

- highest coordination, high salience of violence - “violent rituals” that operate within carefully circumscribed settings;
- high-coordination, high violence - “coordinated destruction”; depending on the levels of force parity between combatants, this takes the form of war, terrorism, etc;
- medium coordination, high violence - “opportunism”; looting and other forms of attacks principally characterized by the withdrawal of routine controls or surveillance;
- low coordination, high violence - “brawls”; the rapid shift of a normally nonviolent interaction into violence, often spurred by high uncertainty and a spiral of signaling between participants;
- low coordination, low violence - “scattered attacks” or sabotage; a resort to violence in what are otherwise generally nonviolent interactions, usually a “weapon of the weak” used by actors facing overwhelming force from their opponents;
- low coordination, medium violence - “broken negotiations”; a (generally temporary) escalation of nonviolent political interactions such as demonstrations into violent confrontation

Tilly goes through these chapter by chapter, discusses the situations in which shifts are observed between

different types of collective violence, and situates each within political regimes (which are categorized along axes of democracy and capacity).

The argument underscores the importance of collective action, organization, and the behavior of political brokers and violent entrepreneurs in shaping outcomes both in contentious politics generally and in collective violence specifically. With theoretically limitless social boundaries and grievances through which people can be divided and spurred to violence, it is these actors that actually determine when outcomes turn violent.

Despite the high-theory content, there were rewards to reading; the book is sprinkled through with interesting little mini-histories and asides from Tilly, giving a sense of what I imagine his teaching style must have been like. Do you love political science typologies? If so, this is a book for you. Otherwise, this can probably be skipped safely.

Sunny Moraine says

A classic. Extraordinarily useful for anyone interested in wars, conflicts, and states, and accessible to the layperson and scholar alike.

Dan Myers says

A few hot spots, but mostly doesn't go anywhere. I published a detailed review in *Mobilization* 10(3).

Ahmet Tezel says

Kitab?n Türkçesi Phoenix yay?nevinden ç?km??. Ancak çeviri ak?c? de?il. Anlamak için cümleleri çok kez tekrar okumak zorunda kald?m.

SpaceBear says

More of a kind of sociological look at the causes of collective violence, its forms, as well as the reasons that people take part in group violence.

The Reader says

A good social analysis of very different forms of collective violence in very different countries/regions/settings. As we would like more IR and PS scholars to write. Charles Tilly is always good

