

Sidney Tarrow, "Charles Tilly and the Practice of Contentious Politics: From France to England and [Not quite] Back Again", *Histoire@Politique. Politique, culture, société*, N°10, janvier-avril 2010, www.histoire-politique.fr

À travers cet article de Sidney Tarrow, la revue Histoire@Politique souhaite saluer la mémoire de Charles Tilly, sociologue et politiste, décédé en avril 2008. Né en 1929, Charles Tilly a terminé sa carrière comme professeur de sciences sociales à l'université de Columbia. Auteur de plusieurs dizaines d'ouvrages et de plusieurs centaines d'articles, il a inspiré de nombreux historiens, en Europe comme aux États-Unis.

Du côté de la France, John Merriman, Michelle Perrot et Patrick Fridenson lui ont rendu hommage dans la revue Le Mouvement social (2008/4, n°225). Charles Tilly s'était lui-même défini comme résident d'un « no man's land » entre histoire et sociologie. Ses nombreux articles méthodologiques illustrent avec humour et finesse la tension créatrice qui existe entre ces disciplines. Charles Tilly fait aussi partie des universitaires américains qui se sont intéressés à la France. C'est en travaillant sur l'histoire des contestations en France du XVII^e au XX^e siècle qu'il a défini les outils théoriques qui sont devenus d'usage courant en sociologie politique. Ainsi du « répertoire d'action collective » ou de la « représentation » comme mise en scène de la revendication.

Sidney Tarrow, professeur à Cornell, est également sociologue et politiste. Spécialiste des mouvements sociaux, il est l'auteur d'une vingtaine d'ouvrages dont Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics (1998). Proche de Charles Tilly, il a écrit avec lui Dynamics of Contention (2001) et Contentious Politics (2007). Ce dernier livre a été traduit aux Presses de Sciences Po sous le titre Politique(s) du conflit. De la grève à la révolution (2008). Dans cet article, il analyse l'itinéraire intellectuel de Charles Tilly à travers ses œuvres, dans un va-et-vient entre sociologie et archives, et entre les deux terrains historiques qu'il avait choisis : la France et la Grande-Bretagne.

Nous avons conservé au texte de Sidney Tarrow le mode de référencement en usage en science politique. Il nous paraît que l'écriture est tributaire de la discipline et que, transcrire en mode historien ces références, en les transformant en notes de bas de page, serait déformer quelque peu le texte sans ajouter à sa signification.

Claire Andrieu

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Charles Tilly and the Practice of Contentious Politics: From France to England and [Not quite] Back Again

Sidney Tarrow

Charles Tilly began his last book, *Contentious Performances* (2008) in this way:

"Looking at the history of popular contention in France from the 17th to the 20th centuries... it occurred to me that in general participants in uprisings and local struggles followed available scripts, adapted those scripts, but only changed them bit by bit. A metaphor came readily to mind: like troupes of street musicians, those French people drew their claim-making performances from standardized, limited repertoires" (Tilly, 2008: xi).

This was an idea that Tilly first put forward in *La France contestée* in 1986. And it was the conceptual tool in which much of his work on Great Britain turned. To his surprise and delight, the idea caught on, and analysts of contention began using the notion of the repertoire widely.

Soon, he continues, with typically wry humor:

"I began to recognize the drawbacks of success....by and large analysts of popular struggles... simply adopted the term to signal the repetitive character of claim making without thinking through what evidence would confirm or deny that repertoires actually facilitated and channelled claim making in the manner of theatrical scripts and standard jazz tunes" (Tilly, 2008: xii).

No one, Tilly complained, responded with evidence about repertoires. So he reluctantly decided he would have to undertake the task himself (1993). Moving from France to Britain, in *Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758-1834* (1995), Tilly sketched the main lines of his theory of the repertoire. But here is a puzzle. Although it was in France that the concept was born, Tilly never applied it systematically to this country.

This talk does not pretend to be a *résumé* of Tilly's long and distinguished career¹. My goal is more modest but still exacting. I hope to demonstrate three things about Tilly's contribution to the study of contentious politics:

- First, although Tilly's systematic empirical work was on Britain, the concept of the repertoire came from his work in France;

¹ Go to the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) website for a representative list of Tilly's major publications at www.ssrc.org/essays/tilly/resources. Visited on 20 June 2008.

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- Second, his discovery of the repertoire was bound up with his shift from what he called the "old structuralism" to a new paradigm – "relational realism" (Tilly & Tarrow, 2008);
- Third, that shift demanded a new way of linking sociology to history and a new set of tools to do so.

But in doing so, Tilly left France, and French contention, behind. It was only in the last years of his life that he returned to this country, but with a conceptual tool that was specified through the history of Britain and no longer fit France. First, however, we need some terminological clarity. In contrast to some of my social movement colleagues, Tilly was always clear about the relationship he saw among three key terms: contentious performances, episodes and repertoires.

Performances, Episodes, Repertoires

Performances, for Tilly, are "learned and historically grounded" ways of making claims on other people which, "in the short run... strongly limit the choices available to would-be makers of claims" (Tilly, 2008: 4-5). "People make claims", he continued,

"With such words as condemn, oppose, resist, demand, beseech, support, and reward. They also make claims with actions such as attacking, expelling, defacing, cursing, cheering, throwing flowers, singing songs, and carrying heroes on their shoulders" (*Ibid.*: 5).

Tilly immediately added two qualifiers: one of which narrowed the range of the contentious performances he studied and the other which broadened it:

First, he narrowed the contentious performances he studied to those involving governments, not because he thought "governments must figure as the makers or receivers of contentious claims" but because, at a minimum, governments monitor, regulate and prepare to step in "if claim making gets unruly" (*Ibid.*: 7).

But at the same time he broadened the range of his inquiries to go well beyond social movements, which he defined as "a very-limited range of claim-making performances" (*Ibid.*) to all kinds of contentious events, in order to study both movements and other forms of contention (e.g., rebellions, strike waves, revolutions, nationalist episodes, democratization, terrorism), but also to focus on the dynamic processes between these different forms of contention: the protest that grows into a social movement; the movement that triggers a revolution; the repression that escalates into a coup.

"Performances concatenate into *episodes*:

Bounded sequences of continuous interaction, usually produced by an investigator's chopping up longer streams of contention into segments for purposes of systematic observation, comparison, and explanation" (Tilly, 2008: 10).

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By examining streams of contention, the inner connections within them, and the responses to them of authorities, he strove to delimit the boundaries of episodes of contention, within which particular performances combine. The distinction between particular performances and the episodes in which they are embedded is important. While the former capture the attention of the media, the latter combine different performances interactively. Some of the most important of these are relatively uncontentious; others are violent; but it is the *interaction* among performances and between them and their context that produce the episode. The episode is the unit of observation within which different performances could be observed or inferred. Both performances and episodes occur within narrow temporal boundaries. But Tilly was interested in longer historical sequences, and in the relationship between how people contend and cultural expectations for contentious behavior. For this Tilly required a broader, historically and more culturally embedded concept: the repertoire.

Repertoires Tilly defined as:

"Claim-making routines that apply to the same claimant-object pairs: bosses and workers, peasants and landlords. Rival nationalist factions, and many more" (Tilly, 2008: 14).

This theatrical metaphor called attention to the clustered, learned, yet improvisational character of people's interactions as they make and receive each other's claims. In his most evocative simile, Tilly wrote:

"Contentious episodes and their performances thus resemble jazz and commedia dell'arte rather than ritual reading of scripture. Like a jazz trio or an improvising theater group, people who participate in contentious politics normally have several pieces they can play, but not an infinity... Within that limited array, the players choose which pieces they will perform here and now, and in what order" (*Ibid.*).

Repertoires change for three main reasons:

- First, regimes permit some performances, forbid others, and tolerate still others; that constrains actors to shy away from some performances, choose others, and innovate between the two;
- Second, the history of contention constrains peoples' choices. You are more likely to call an episode a revolution if your country experienced one in the past than if it never had one;
- And third, changes in political opportunity structure encourage some actions, discourage others, and give people the opportunity to innovate on known scripts.

This model of innovation around known scripts and opportunities led Tilly to one of his more controversial claims: that "contentious performances change incrementally

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as a result of accumulating experience and external constraints and not as a result of 'great events'" (Tilly, 2008: 5).

But what of events like the French Revolution? The Islamist suicide bomb? The African-American sit-ins? Are there no epochal shifts in the repertoire of contention? Tilly's answer: "Very seldom." Instead, he saw the combination of opportunity, constraint, and innovation producing two rhythms of change in the profile of contention:

- First, the short-term rhythms within particular episodes that produce sparks of innovation, most of which sputter out when the episode ends;
- Second, longer-term rhythms of secular change in national repertoires, like the one that Tilly described between mid-18th and early 19th century Britain (Tarrow, 1996). He started in the West of France.

Tilly began to study contentious politics in France for his Harvard PhD dissertation in the late 1950s, an effort that produced his first book, *The Vendée* (1964). But the term "repertoire" did not appear until the publication of *La France contestée* in the mid-1980s. Why did it take him so long? The main reason was that he hadn't yet developed the tools necessary for the collection, enumeration and analysis of the vast amounts of data he would need to study the internal structures of repertoires and their changes over time and because he was still working within the structuralist paradigm he learned at the feet of his great teacher, Barrington Moore Jr.

In *The Vendée* there was little direct attention to how people contended but a lot of attention paid to the structural correlates of different degrees of support for the Revolution. Tilly's account ran roughly like this: When the revolution came into the hands of the urban bourgeoisie and its agents in the countryside, the urbanized Val-Saumurois adapted to the changes, but the semi-urbanized Mauges produced opposition. The result was that the variations in counter-revolutionary collective action that Tilly traced in the empirical sections of his book were the result of variations in urbanization:

"Urbanization seemed relevant because cities clearly played different roles and had gone through different recent histories in the revolutionary and counterrevolutionary sections of western France, and because so many of the collective conflicts in the region during the early Revolution pitted groups based in the country against groups based in the city" (1964: vii).

Much of the first part of Tilly's career was occupied with illuminating the relations between such structural factors as urbanization and contentious collective action. Put somewhat bluntly by William Sewell; "Charmed by his own universalizing rhetoric, he pursued the notion that acts of political contestation arise from gradual evolutionary changes in large and anonymous social processes..." (Sewell, 1996: 253). There was no way Tilly could arrive at a historical anthropology of the repertoire through the kind of structuralist history he engaged in *The Vendée*.

But he was not ready to fully embrace the popular quantitative methodology of the 1970s either. Reflecting on his early ontological choices, he would later write of the atmosphere during the years after he published *The Vendée*:

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"In those distant days, Method meant statistical analysis, and Explanation meant one of three things: 1) location of a phenomenon within some large social structure (at the limit a society or civilization), 2) discovery of strong correlations between two variables, or (if you were lucky), 3) identification of necessary and sufficient conditions for some important phenomenon... Yet while still a graduate student I also encountered historical analysis, and realized that the search for constant conjunction and correlation had two serious defects: it ignored transformative processes and it promoted premature simplification" (Tilly & Tarrow, 2008: 2).

Tilly gestured towards correlational analysis in his book with Edward Shorter, *Strikes in France*, but he was so uncomfortable with the method that that book is cited exactly twice in the book he later wrote with his son Chris, *Work Under Capitalism* (1998). After that, Tilly became less enamored with pure quantitative models and more with the examination of what he later called "relational" mechanisms and processes (McAdam et al., 2001: ch. 1; Tilly, 2002). He became convinced that what matters in history are not structures but interactions – and, in particular, *contentious* interactions. Thus the title of his second book on France, *The Contentious French*. And thus his ontological shift from structuralism to what he called "relational realism."

By "relational realism" Tilly meant "the doctrine that transactions, interactions, social ties and conversations constitute the central stuff of social life" (Tilly & Tarrow, 2008: 7). That led him to the search for causal mechanisms that change existing relationships and to weaving those mechanisms into larger historical processes (2002). It would ultimately lead, in one direction, to a finer-grained search for the mechanisms internal to episodes of contention, and, in the other, to tracing the historical progression of different modes of contentious interaction that cluster into repertoires of contention over a longer *durée*.

The Search for Method

The first step he took remained within the archival tradition he had explored in *The Vendée* but it was archival work with a difference: In an important article with David Snyder (Snyder and Tilly, 1972), Tilly enumerated hundreds of incidences of collective violence in French history between 1830 and 1960 from the French archives. In contrast with the "hardship model" that dominated studies of contentious politics in America at that time (Gurr, 1970), Tilly and his collaborator found that the rhythms of collective violence matched major political changes in this country and could be best understood, not as a form of disorder, but as a form of politics. This was the origin of the "polity model" that first appeared in Chapter Two of his magisterial text, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (1978), and was the source of his growing emphasis on political struggle.

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There were two major limitations to this work as he later recognized. For one thing, archival records exaggerated violence, because that is what interested the officials who collected them; for another, the status of the events they record is not clear. Events could be isolated *performances* (e.g., a single group of peasants takes the grain from a miller who has been withholding it for urban markets); or part of a larger *episode of contention* (e.g., those peasants might have previously remonstrated with the miller with no results, then sent respected representatives to warn him of the consequences if he didn't offer his grain to local consumers, and finally petitioned the justice of the peace for redress).

Second, the numerical counts of protest events or strikes failed to capture the interactions of those who protested and their relations to authorities, third parties, and the police. The effect of the thin nature of the data was to produce correlational models of static relationships between single performances and underlying socio-economic variables. Instead, Tilly wanted to examine what he began to call "sequences and combinations of causal *mechanisms*" that produce entire episodes of contention and, over time, constitute the repertoire of contention (2002; McAdam et al., 2001: 11-12)².

Over the next decade, Tilly would grapple with the relationship among performances and episodes and how they formed patterns that mark particular periods of history and changes over time – *repertoires of contention*. Those were the patterns that would produce his systematic work on the changes in the repertoire of contention in Britain. But the road to London led through France.

Contending with France

The 1980s brought Tilly from the raw statistical analyses of his 1970s work back to historical narrative – but to narrative of an unusual kind. In *The Vendée*, he had studied a single struggle in two adjoining areas through one provincial archive. In *La France contestée* (1986), he extended his reach to four hundred years of French history, devoting each chapter of the book to contentious action in a particular region during a specific century. And where *Strikes in France* and his article with Snyder had been based on standard statistical sources, *The Contentious French* drew on enormous masses of historical material on the forms of political conflict in different regions and centuries from official and unofficial sources.

La France contestée is where we first find an extended discussion of the concept of the repertoire, which he framed, in contrast to the then-popular view that contention is "disorderly":

² Tilly's growing preference for causal, over correlational analysis has sometimes been interpreted to mean that he was hostile to systematic statistical analysis. That would be a major misunderstanding of his epistemological stance; together with Doug McAdam and this author, he argued vigorously that causal mechanisms could be traced with both systematic and statistical analysis and through detailed process tracing. See McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2008.

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"In following the very same actions that authorities call disorders, we see the repetition of a limited number of actions. In seventeenth-century France, ordinary people did not know how to demonstrate, rally, or strike. But they had standard routines for expelling a tax collector from town, withdrawing their allegiance from corrupt officials, and shaming moral offenders" (1986: 4).

Each of these forms of action, he wrote,

"Links some concrete group of people to some other individual, group or groups. Each originates and changes as a function of continuing interaction – struggle, collaboration, competition, or some combination of them – among groups" (ibid.).

But Tilly had not yet fashioned the methodological tools to enumerate the vast amounts of historical data he would need to track the evolution of the repertoire and map its locations in social and regime structure. The narrative method of *The Vendee* was too local and too contextualized; the statistical method of *Strikes in France* was too abstract and too decontextualized; *La France conteste* arbitrarily chose regions and sites of contention and swept too casually over centuries of history. It was across the channel that he would produce methodological and ontological attacks on all three problems.

To England

Even as he was completing *The Contentious French*, Tilly was exploring how to extract the evolution of collective action from non-official serial sources. In *Popular Contention in Great Britain* (1995), Tilly and his group at the University of Michigan gathered information about what he called "contentious gatherings" from seven different press sources and from the Acts and Proceedings of Parliament for southeast England for a sample of thirteen years between 1758 and 1828, and for Britain as a whole for every year between 1828 and 1834. This seventy-six year produced a dataset of over 8000 contentious events, both big and small, local and national.

This was sufficient contention to satisfy even Tilly's voracious appetite! But how to digest it without producing the pale event catalogues of *Strikes in France* or the sweeping narratives of *La France conteste*? In *Contentious Brits*, he also used a method of periodization – but for much shorter periods than in *La France conteste*. The book divided into sections that dealt with four discrete historical periods: "The Era of Wilkes and Gordon" (1758 - 1788), "Revolution, War, and Other Struggles" (1789 - 1815), "State, Class and contention" (1816 - 1827), and "Struggle and Reform" (1828 - 1834).

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The Return of the Event

Why bother studying events and why do so in England, which had not interested Tilly in the past? The answer to the first question was that he was uncomfortable with the eventless history that followers of Braudel, like Immanuel Wallerstein, were producing. And the reason for the second was, in part, because he wanted to challenge the conservative British historical profession to accept the new social history, and in part because Britain had a longer and less interrupted development of both popular publishing and contentious politics starting in the early 18th century.

In Anglo-Saxon social science, there was a growing interest in the systematic study of series of events. Social historians like Eric Hobsbawm and George Rudé placed the analysis of events at the center of their history of the Swing movement (1968). E.P. Thompson focused on the internal dynamics of grain seizures in his landmark article on "The political economy of the English crowd" (1971). But both continued to use the narrative historical method traditional in British historiography. For experimentation with new historical methods he would have to cross the Atlantic. It was in the United States that international relations scholars followed the model of Ted Robert Gurr's *Why Men Rebel?* (1970) by developing computer-assisted analyses of wars, diplomacy, revolutions, and what they called "conflict events". Eventually, these large-number quantitative methods were applied to the analysis of ethnic conflicts (Gurr et al, 1993) and civil wars (Collier and Hoeffler, 1998; Fearon and Laitin, 2003; see the review in Tarrow, 2007). And a sprinkling of Americans, like Doug McAdam (1982), Craig Jenkins (1986) and this author (1989) had begun to apply event history methods to social movements. But they did so in two very different ways: *eventful histories*, and *statistical event counts*.

Eventful history: In his work on France, William Sewell reacted against both the *longue durée* focus of the *Annales* school and more violently against deconstruction, calling for events to be the central subject of historical analysis (2005). Around such great events as the seizure of the Bastille, Sewell built stories of rupture and reconstruction of structure.

Event histories: In contrast to Sewell's call for the embedding of great events in their historical contexts, Susan Olzak made *classes* of events the standardized data points in catalogs that she used as time-varying measures of socio-economic processes (1992).

Both approaches left Tilly unsatisfied. While eventful histories *à la* Sewell were deeply embedded in Great Events (e.g., the embedding of the seizure of the Bastille with the doctrine of popular sovereignty) they skated casually over accumulations of smaller events that might prove important in producing the evolution of the repertoire. In contrast, event-counters like Olzak were bound by the thinness of the catalogs they constructed and tended to adopt the newspaper writer's definition of events. Tilly was looking for a middle ground, "where logical rigor meets the nuances of human interaction", between the depth of Sewell's embedding of events in thick history and the broad but thin sweep of the event counters.

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His first move was to discard the conventional practice of transforming the words in textual sources into pre-coded numerical data for purposes of analysis. For each event that he and his coders uncovered, they assembled numerous "codesheets", compared and reconciled sources, added verbal material where it was available, and paid particular attention to how contention was organized, who organized it and who or what were its targets. Tilly was especially interested in recording all the major subjects, verbs and objects of each act of contention in his records of contentious gatherings³.

From these analyses, Tilly drew three lessons: First, it is practically feasible to record and analyze the internal dynamics of contentious episodes instead of settling for classified event counts; second, linking verbs with objects make it possible to move from individualistic analyses to treatments of the connections among contentious actors (Tilly, 2008: 27); third, recording particular verbs rather than general characterization of the action is critical for understanding the internal dynamics of contention.

The most original insight was the final one. If it is collective interaction that we are interested in, our focus should be on the *action verbs* that characterize the performances that link claims-makers to their objects and targets – in short, not who the actors are or where they are structurally embedded in society, but what they do to each other. For this, Tilly's elaborated codesheets offered a precious resource, one that he exploited in *Contentious Performances*: Rather than characterize each event or episode as an expression of a single performance (e.g., "workers struck", students sat-in", "terrorists bombed,") his subject/action/object triplets allowed him to find out which interactions combined in complex episodes. That provided him with measures of the internal structure of his contentious episodes.

This procedure permitted Tilly to both examine the internal structure of each contentious gathering (e.g., how many discrete forms of collective action did it contain, in what sequence did they occur, who used what forms of action against which target?) but also to detect and analyze changes in the nature of British (and by implication, modern) contentious politics over time.

Repertoires, Old and New

³ In looking for models for how to do this, Tilly drew on and improved on the work of several others: from Clark McPhail, who had "decomposed actions and interactions into four broad categories: facing, voicing, manipulating and locomotion" (McPhail, 1991; McPhail, Schweingrouper and Ceobanu, 2006; Tilly, 2008: 23); from this author, who "incorporated textual descriptions as a number of critical points" in his otherwise quantitative codebook (Tarrow, 1989; Tilly, 2008: 25); from Roberto Franzosi, who developed a logic using "observed combinations of subject, verb, and object" to identify "interactions", producing "rich analyses first of the single episode and then of many episodes" (Franzosi, 2004; Tilly, 2008: 25); and, finally, from Tilly's student, Takashi Wada, who "drew subject-verb-object records from daily Mexican newspapers to develop network models of who made claims on whom" (2003; 2004; Tilly, 2008: 26). Tilly's willingness to learn from those (like this author) who sat at his feet was one of his most striking virtues as a scholar.

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Using this method, Tilly found two rough repertoires in Britain during the period he studied, each of which was an adaptation to a different type of society. The first he found dominant in mid-eighteenth century England, while the second become more prominent there by the 1820s and 1830s. He writes:

"The first was *parochial, bifurcated and particular*: It was *parochial* because most often the interests and interaction involved concentrated in a single community... it was *bifurcated* because when ordinary people addressed local issues and nearby objects they took impressively direct action to achieve their ends, but when it came to national issues and objects they recurrently addressed their demands to a local patron or authority, who might represent their interest, redress their grievance, fulfill his own obligation, or at least authorize them to act... and it was *particular* because the detailed routines of action varied greatly from group to group, issue to issue, locality to locality" (1995: 45).

The second set of events were *cosmopolitan, modular and autonomous*:

"They were *cosmopolitan* in referring to interests and issues that spanned many localities or affected centers of power whose actions touched many localities; they were *modular* in being easily transferable from one setting or circumstance to another; and they were *autonomous* in beginning on the claimants' own initiative and establishing direct communication between claimants and nationally-significant centers of power" (1995: 46)⁴.

These changes, Tilly insisted, were not teleological but reflected a shift to a new set of tools that were adopted because "new users took up new tasks, and found the available tools inadequate to their problems and abilities". By studying how real people made claims through actual struggles with others and against the state over a period of massive economic and political change, Tilly attempted to trace the extent to which these changes related to capitalism and state-building. For the secular changes in British collective action did not appear randomly in British history; they correlated roughly with the growing centralization of the state and the capitalization of the economy.

Back to France

But there was a consequence of using Britain as the laboratory for working out Tilly's theoretical trajectories. Britain was at the same time the first industrializer and was undergoing a steady parliamentarization of politics during the period he studied. The

⁴ In an earlier trilogy, Tilly had typologized contention as "proactive, reactive and competitive" (1979), which he almost immediately discarded in favor of the new one when he realized that these terms overlapped empirically.

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first step in his demonstration was to show how the extensive increase in capacity of the British regime between the 1750s and the 1830s affected the tenor and the extent of contention over that period. His summary tells it all:

"A bigger and higher-capacity state intervened more aggressively in local life, taxed more heavily, exerted more control over the food supply, and regulated workers' organizations more closely. Parliamentarization shifted power away from the crown, the nobility and their patron-client networks. It also increased the impact of the legislators' actions on local affairs. These changes gradually undermined the effectiveness of claim-making performances in the 18th-century mode: particular, parochial, and bifurcated. In their place, cosmopolitan, modular, and autonomous performances gained leverage" (Tilly, 2008: 159-60).

Britain was also at war during more years of the period he studied than it was at peace. War had a profound effect on the British state and on British contention: it increased the size of the state, placed it under enormous fiscal stress, which led it to put the pressure on the American colonies that led to both contention and revolution. That revolution produced the first stirrings of a democratic movement in Britain, including the Wilkeite claim that American settlers deserved the rights of Englishmen (Tilly, 1995: ch. 4).

Through the decades from 1758 to 1789, a steady growth of the British state, its expanding parliamentarization, and increasing fiscal pressure on the middle class produced an incremental shift from the old repertoire to the new one and from violent confrontations in the provinces to associational social movements in the capital. These trends logically produced an incremental shift from the parochial, bifurcated and particular repertoire of the 1760s to the cosmopolitan, modular and general one of the 1820s and 1830s.

The Tillian challenge

But would such a trend apply elsewhere? How, for example, would it apply to France, the origin of Tilly's concept of the repertoire and of many of the ideas that he applied and elaborated in Britain? Long after the publication of Tilly's *La France conteste*, but before the appearance of *Contentious Performances*, Jean Nicolas published his massive account of pre-revolutionary French contention, *La Rébellion française* (Seuil, 2002). Alas, Tilly does not cite Nicolas' book in his *Performances* and the latter discusses Tilly's *oeuvre* only to point out how sweeping his enterprise was in *La France conteste* (1986: 14). This is a pity because, in its great depth of archival detail and professional erudition, Nicolas' is a perfect pendant for Tilly's more specialized book.

Even odder, Tilly, in *Contentious Performances*, never explicitly compared the trajectories of British repertoire change to France – France does not even appear in the index of that book. Had he done so, he would have had to answer a number of

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troubling questions. For example he would have to tell us how the Commune, the Popular Front, and the Vichyiste regression of the 1940s affected the glacial changes in repertoires he had found in Britain. The incremental nature of British political history directly affected Tilly's theory that the repertoire changes incrementally but would the repertoire change so incrementally in a country with the chequered political history of France?

Tilly could never be completely silent about France. In one of the many books he turned out as his health was failing, *Regimes and Repertoires*, published in 2006, he returned to the French Revolution.

- First, looking at the last period of the *Ancien Régime*, he found, despite the dramatic contrasts with British developments, a traditional repertoire that looked remarkably like Britain's (2006: 104);
- Second, *pace* Furet and his anti-sociological followers, he found that the Revolution brought to prominence "thousands of city professionals who seized the opportunity to develop political careers" (Hunt 1984: 155) and "opened opportunities to groups that had previously had little access to government-sanctioned power – especially the village and small-town bourgeoisie" (Tilly 2006: 111);
- Third, he reminded his readers that "the Republic's call for a great levy of troops to face the expanded demands of war had touched off widespread resistance", not only in the West but in many parts of the south (*Ibid.*, 109-10);
- Fourth, he found that the changes in contention in the course of the revolutionary decade were directly linked to the new governments' establishment of direct and centralized rule;
- And, finally, the revolution produced the same shift to modern political citizenship that was evolving through parliamentarization and warmaking in Britain.

Was the French path to modern democracy like Britain's? Certainly not, and Tilly knew it. In his *Democracy* (2007), he wrote:

"France... refutes any notion of democratization as a gradual, deliberated, irreversible process or as a handy set of political inventions a people simply locks into place when it is ready... . It displays the crucial importance of struggle and shock for both democracy and its reversals" (2007: 33).

But he never returned to contentious politics in France in a systematic way.

Before he died, in April 2008, friends and critics dared him to return to his home base in France to systematically compare its trajectory of contentious politics to Britain's. In the year of his death, Tilly took the lead in the publication of a textbook in French with this author (Tilly and Tarrow, 2008), which offered a manual for students interested in applying his methods to France. But alas for us, he left us before he could see how that effort would bear fruit.

But he needn't have worried. Others had already taken up the Tillian challenge, using concepts and methods that he invented and elaborating their own. Much of the best

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French work on contentious politics focuses precisely on performances, especially on the demonstration (Favre, 1990; Fillieule, 1997; Fillieule and Tartakowsky, 2008; Tartakowsky, 1997, 1998, 2004, 2005), but also on the occupation of premises (Mathieu, 2001), the march (Pigenet and Tartakowsky (eds.), 2003) and, of course, the strike, especially in the work of Tilly's friend, Michelle Perrot (1974), and in numerous works on strikes under the aegis of René Mouriaux.

Not only that: While no one has yet adopted Tilly's more recent methodological innovations, French scholars have pioneered in the application of surveys of activists within episodes of contention (Favre, Filleule and Mayer, 1998; Fillieule and Tartakowsky, 2008: ch. 4). Most important, French scholars have been closely attentive to the interactive nature of political contention (for example, see Favre, 1990); to the sequential twists and turns of episodes of contention (Mathieu, 2001); and to the interaction between protesters and the police (Fillieule, 1997; Fillieule and della Porta (eds.), 2006). The truest heritage of this great comparativist has been where he began his career five decades ago.

Future Challenges

Even as his health began to fail, Tilly was plotting new attacks on problems he wanted to explore⁵. He closed *Contentious Performances* with an agenda for future research. "The book as a whole," he wrote, "has pursued a thin object of explanation: not the whole of contentious politics and its social bases but the public performances in which people make consequential, collective, public claims on others". It could have done much more, he admitted, to "look systematically at how alterations in political opportunities, available models for claim making, and connections among potential claimants produce changes in performances and repertoires". "If the weaknesses of that approach inspire my readers to invent different and superior methods for investigating contentious performances", he concluded: "I will cheer them on" (Tilly, 2008: 211).

And so he would.

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⁵ One of these plans was for a book on the impact of the changes in warfare in the early 21st century on state-rebuilding, returning to his thinking on war and statebuilding in Tilly 1985 and 1990. Another was for a book to be called "Cities and States in World History" which would have drawn together his work on urbanization, trust networks and state building. A forthcoming issue of *Theory and Society* will publish the first chapter of this book with a collection of articles brought together by his son, Chris Tilly, and his former student, Michael Hanagan.

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Après son premier livre, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy*, Sidney Tarrow a publié une étude comparée en collaboration avec Donald Blackmer, *Communism in Italy and France*. En 1977, il a publié une autre étude comparée des élites locales en France et en Italie, intitulée *Between Center and Periphery. Democracy and Disorder* (1989) qui a porté principalement sur le cycle de protestations en Italie pendant les « années de plomb ». Parmi ses publications récentes : *Power in Movement* ; *Dynamics of Contention* (avec Doug McAdam et Charles Tilly) ; *The New Transnational Activism* ; et *Contentious Politics* (avec Charles Tilly) paru en français aux Presses de Sciences Po sous le titre de *Politique(s) du conflit*.

Résumé

Charles Tilly, qui est décédé en avril 2008, a laissé un riche héritage de contributions à l'histoire et aux sciences sociales, concernant, notamment, l'histoire de France. Le concept de « répertoire d'action collective » issu de son dernier livre sur la France, *La France conteste*, est l'un de ses plus importants apports aux sciences sociales. Charles Tilly a ensuite affiné cette notion culturellement située et historiquement enracinée, dans son livre sur la Grande-Bretagne et, plus récemment, dans son maître ouvrage, *Politiques(s) du conflit*. Paradoxalement, alors que des chercheurs français poursuivent, à l'instar de Tilly, la tradition d'une recherche historiquement enracinée et portant sur les répertoires d'action dans les conflits, lui-même n'a pas appliqué à la France le concept qu'il avait affiné par l'étude du cas britannique. Confrontées à l'exemple français, certaines de ses découvertes réalisées outre-manche auraient pu être contestées, voire même révisées.

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Abstract

*Charles Tilly, who passed away in April 2008, left a rich heritage of contributions to both history and the social sciences – and, in particular, to historical social science on France. Among his most enduring contributions was one that grew out of his last book on France, *La France conteste*: the concept of the "repertoire of conflict." This culturally-embedded and historically rooted concept was then elaborated with a unique mix of qualitative and quantitative methods in his book on Great Britain, and more recently in his masterwork, *Contentious Performances*. Paradoxically, while French scholars carry forward Tilly's tradition of historically rooted research on repertoires of contention, he never brought the new elaboration of the concept back to France, where some of his British findings might have been contested, or even revised.*

Mots-clés : Furet ; armée citoyenne ; révolution ; Tilly ; construction de l'État ; guerre ; Grande-Bretagne ; répertoire.

Keywords: Furet; Citizen army; Revolution; Tilly; State-building; War; Great Britain; Repertoire.

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