A Theoretical Critique of the Western Biases in the Political Process Theory of Social Movements

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Thesis submitted to the faculty of

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Science in Sociology

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July 22, 2005

Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: Social Movements, Third World Political Economy, Sociological Theory

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the construction of a theoretical framework for empirical examination of social movements in Third World countries. Political process theory, currently a dominant perspective on social movements, is the most promising starting point for such a research program; however, it has inherent Western biases, which severely limit its explanatory power for examining Third World social movements. Specifically, I contend that political process theory's understanding of the relationship between the state and social movements, as well as its assumptions about the dynamics of political opportunity structures, inadequately capture the complexities of the Third World social movements. Therefore, as the basis of a larger project, I critique the western biases inherent in the theoretical framework of the political process theory, focusing exclusively on Doug McAdam's contributions to this approach. I employ a hermeneutic method, since it provides a useful means for engaging in discourse with texts. I conclude that McAdam's views on political opportunity and the state reflect a Eurocentric reading and understanding, in large part because his analyses have been based on democratic states. Accordingly, some of the political process theory's key shortcomings for Third World applications are that it overemphasizes the analytic and practical importance of the

electoral system and that its logic is rooted in unrealistic assumptions of inherently stable political structures and institutionalized democratic processes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, this thesis is my own, possibly controversial interpretation and critique of political process theory. Any errors or weaknesses that may remain are mine, and are not the responsibility of my thesis committee – Drs Dunaway, Fuhrman, and Wimberley – or of others who have helped me along the way.

Secondly, I would like to take this time to thank those who have played an integral role in this project. I would like to thank my parents, Joanne and John Seiler, for their undying love and support. They are my inspiration and my support system. As with all my endeavors, I dedicate this project to them. I would also like to thank my co-chairs, Drs. Wimberley and Fuhrman, for their support and insights. I especially want to thank Dr. Wilma Dunaway for her inspiration and guidance in my research and career. Finally, I would like to thank my friends and colleagues for their moral support, advice, and patience.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In recent months, I have attempted to examine why Thailand has not experienced a persistent labor movement since the 1970s. Although the political process theory provides a useful paradigm for examining the labor movement during the 1970s, I have found it increasingly problematic for examining the decline of the labor movement, as well as the current context of labor activism in Thailand. According to the political process theory, the socio-political, economic, and cultural context is conducive to a vibrant labor movement. In fact, since 1992, Thailand has been a relatively stable democracy and the government has decriminalized union organizations. Moreover, Brown (2004) argues that a large portion of the lower class labor force remains discontent with the substandard working conditions. However, the labor movement has been relatively dormant since the mid-1970s. Ultimately, I have found political process theory, in its current state, inadequate for explaining why the Thai labor movement has remained dormant for over 30 years. Therefore, as the foundation of the larger schema for examining labor activism in Thailand, I begin here by analyzing the fitness of the political process theory for examining all types of social movements in Third World countries, as defined, refined, and defended by its originator, Doug McAdam.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

I contend that the hypothesized relationship between the state and social movements as well as the dynamics of political opportunity structures in the political process theory has fundamental Western biases, which severely limit its explanatory power for examining Third

World social movements. Furthermore, I argue that the inherent Western biases in the political process theory have even influenced the questions political process theorists ask when examining social movements. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to contribute to the construction of a paradigm for the empirical examination of social movements in Third World countries by teasing out the Western biases within the political process theory. I believe McAdam's political process theory is the most promising paradigm for the scientific study of the emergence, development, and decline of social movement. Therefore, I limit my critique to examining the western biases in McAdam's conceptualization of the role of the state and his use of political opportunity structures in the emergence, development, and decline of social movements.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Development of McAdam's Political Process Theory

Scholars have long been concerned with identifying social processes that help explain why and how social movements emerge, develop, and, subsequently, decline. However, the discipline has experienced substantial theoretical shifts over the last 35 years. McAdam has been a prime contributor to the significant developments in social movement scholarship since the 1980s. McAdam worked with some of the most renowned scholars of social movements- John McCarthy, Sidney Tarrow, Charles Tilly, and Mayer Zald- to refine and develop the theories and methods for examining social movements. The books and articles that McAdam and these scholars produced influenced significantly the direction of social movement scholarship.

In the 1970s, social movement scholarship shifted from social psychological analyses of social movement phenomena to political analyses of social movements. Prior to the 1970s, scholars employed theories of deviance, collective behavior, relative depravation, and mass society to examine social movements. Many of these scholars attributed social movement behavior to irrationality and social exclusion, along with a number of other social psychological factors (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1988).

By the early 1970s, scholars began focusing on the socio-political element of social movements. Resource mobilization and political opportunity structures were two of the most prominent theories that arose from the socio-political paradigmatic shift in the 1970s (see Lipsky 1970; Eisinger 1973; McCarthy and Zald, 1973, 1977; Tilly, 1978). Resource Mobilization received significant attention because of the theoretical emphasis on formal organizations,

leadership, and networks in the mobilization and emergence of social movements. Political Opportunity also received significant attention because it emphasized the contingent relationship between social structural processes and the emergence of social movements. The social psychological paradigms of social movements lost their popularity to Resource Mobilization and Political Opportunity because social movement scholars using the later paradigms began producing many empirical studies that effectively discounted many of the social-psychological hypotheses (McCarthy and Zald 1973; McAdam 1982; McAdam et al. 1988).

Resource Mobilization and Political Opportunity theories did not necessarily develop in harmony with one another. In fact, they developed as two mutually exclusive paradigms. However, in 1982 McAdam published his first book entitled Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970 in which he purposed a synthetic of Resource Mobilization and Political Opportunity. Moreover, he added a third element to the paradigm: cognitive liberation. Borrowing from Piven and Cloward's (1979) theory of "necessary cognition," McAdam suggested that a significant transformation of consciousness must occur within the aggrieved group before it can utilize the resources available to mobilize and exploit political opportunities (McAdam 1982). Ultimately, McAdam's political process theory has profoundly influenced the trajectory of the study of social movements, taking it from divergent socio-political theories to the development of a synthetic theory of social movements; moreover, he further sealed the fate of the previously popular social-psychological theories by establishing an even stronger case for the socio-political factors in social movements.

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, the political process theory became increasingly popular among social movement scholars. However, the political process theory made its most profound mark on social movement literature in 1996 with McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald's

book titled Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunity, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings. McAdam et al. (1996) pulled together some of the most renowned scholars of social movements to examine, develop, and promote their synthetic theory of social movements. This book arguably became one of the most significant publications on social movement theory in the 1990s. It has produced edifying dialogue and debate about the empirical study of social movements, as well as sparked a multitude of innovative research on social movements (for examples, see Cress and Snow, 2000; Goodwin and Jasper, 2004; McCammon, Campbell, Granberg, and Mowery, 2001; Meyer, 2004;Tarrow 2003; Van Dyke 2003).

The synthetic theory in McAdam et al. (1996) has considerable continuity with the theory that McAdam (1982) presented originally. For example, instead of McAdam's (1982) original term cognitive liberation, McAdam et al. (1996) refer to these processes as framing processes, explicitly incorporating a social psychological component into the previous structural model. In addition, instead of McAdam's terms indigenous organizational strength, McAdam et al. (1996) refer to this simply as mobilization structures; however, the 1996 definition changed little from the definition in McAdam's (1982) original theory.

While McAdam et al. (1996) was a marker for a shift in the political process theory, another shift was developing around the same time. McAdam began working with Tarrow and Tilly on a collaborative research grant on contentious politics. Their purpose in constructing the contentious politics paradigm was to provide an all-inclusive theory for examining all social movements in any environment. The fundamental distinction between political process theory and contentious politics is that (1) all types of contentious political behavior are included in the paradigm for the study of contentious politics, not just social movements as in the political

process theory and (2) while the political process theory still provides the basic framework for examining contentious political behavior, this new paradigm examines the dynamics among the different elements of the political process theory.

Similar to the subtle theoretical and semantic shifts from McAdam's (1982) original theory in McAdam et al. (1996), McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001) makes even more subtle theoretical and semantic shifts. For example, instead of referring to the terms institutionalized and non-institutionalized politics that McAdam used frequently in the political process theory, McAdam et al. (2001) term this variable contained and transgressive politics. The terms have the same meaning in both theories. Ultimately, contentious politics is simply another variant form, an elaboration, if you will, of the political process theory. However, the study of contentious politics has been highly criticized for engaging in paradigm wars and proposing a grand theory for all types of political behavior in all environments (Lichbach 1998).

The field of social movement research has shifted drastically over the last 35 years, and McAdam has been a major player in the positive changes for the majority of those years. Since McAdam presented his initial political process theory in 1982, the field of social movement studies shifted toward the underlying political processes that influence social movements. McAdam synthesized his theory further in his book with McCarthy and Zald (McAdam et al. 1996). Finally, the political process theory morphed into the study of contentious politics by 2001. However, throughout all the modifications to the political process theory, the basic, original model remains as the underlying framework of the political process theory. McAdam's contributions to the political process theory undoubtedly contributed greatly to the positive trajectory of the political process theory.

2.2. McAdam's Political Process Theory

2.2.1. The Central Framework of the Political Process Theory

McAdam developed the political process theory from a Marxist perspective of elite and non-elite relations (McAdam 1982). He argued that Marx's theory of collective class-consciousness and proletariat revolution was incomplete. That is, Marx never proposed any recommendations for how revolution should be coordinated or how to pursue collective action. McAdam developed the political process theory to examine those areas of collective action that Marx did not address. Ultimately, he argued against the common pluralist notions that suggest that all organizations have equal access to the state, and it is up to the organization to maintain resources to continuously lobby for its cause (McAdam 1982). Rather, the political process theory is based on the disparity of power between the elites, who also run the state, and non-elites who are subject to elite-rule and exploitation from elites (McAdam 1982). Moreover, he argued that the political process theory is "based on a particular conception of power in America… and is consistent with the elite model" (McAdam 1982:36).

McAdam's basic hypothesis was that a favorable political environment for collective organization plus access to necessary resources for mobilization equals the structural potential for a social movement. The "objective" structural potential provides the necessary "cognitive cues capable of triggering the process of cognitive liberation" (McAdam and Moore 1989:259). He argued, "That the emergence of widespread protest activity is the result of a combination of expanding political opportunities and indigenous organization, as mediated through a crucial process of collective attribution" (McAdam 1982:2). Therefore, once enough of the aggrieved population perceives their grievances as changeable and believe that they have the ability to

create the necessary change, they can exploit the structural opportunities, and, subsequently, a social movement emerges.

Once the movement has emerged, a new dynamic process begins. The state and the social movement become involved in a contentious and recursive relationship of power. Based on the social, political, and economic arrangements, insurgents employ tactics that they believe will be effective. In order to maintain, or regain, social control, the state must respond with actions to extinguish the insurgency quickly. Each action and reaction inevitably leads to shifts in the political context. Based on the tactical response from the state and the changing political context, insurgents must create new and innovative tactics. The cyclical process continues until the movement achieves its goals and dies out, the polity successfully extinguishes the insurgency, the movement environment is no longer conducive to the movement, or a combination of the three occurs (McAdam 1983). Ultimately, the degree of insurgency is directly proportional to increasing political opportunities, increasing organizational strength, and maintenance of collective attribution, and indirectly proportional to the level of social control imposed by the state (McAdam 1982, 1983).

Therefore, the basic elements of the political process theory, as well as contentious politics, are political opportunity, mobilizing structures, and cognitive liberation. These three elements have been the cornerstone of the political process theory since its inception, and continue to be the backbone of contentious politics.

Political opportunity is the primary structural prerequisite to social movement mobilization. McAdam explained political opportunity as "any event or broad social process that serves to undermine the calculations or assumptions on which the political establishment is structured" (McAdam 1982:41). He developed this definition from Lipsky's (1970) and

Eisinger's (1973) theories of structures of political opportunity. Eisinger (1973:25) defined structures of political opportunity as "the degree to which groups are likely to gain access to power and to manipulate the political system." However, after surveying the work of six scholars of political opportunity, McAdam (1996:27) refined the concept of political opportunity to four "highly consensual" dimensions of political opportunity: (1) the relative openness and closure of the institutionalized political system; (2) the stability or instability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity; (3) the presence or absence of elite alliances; and (4) the state's capacity and propensity for repression. According to the political process theory, these political dimensions must be in favor of the insurgents in order for any social movement to arise.

The second structural prerequisite of a social movement is indigenous organizations, which must exist in order for insurgents to mobilize. He defined indigenous organizations as resources within the aggrieved community that facilitate the exploitation of the political opportunities (McAdam 1982). His criticism of resource mobilization scholars was that they focused only on the support of elite organization in mobilizing resources. In fact, he argued, "elite involvement in social protest may more often contribute to the demise of a movement than to its success" (McAdam 1982:27). He distinguished indigenous organizations for resource mobilization by emphasizing the local level resource base instead of the elite base. Indigenous organizations consist of four significant components- members, established structures of solidarity incentives, communication networks, and leaders- that contribute to the movement mobilization and continuance (McAdam 1982). Ultimately, a favorable political environment is the minimal requirement for a social movement to arise, but insurgents cannot mobilize without the necessary resources for sustaining the movement. Therefore, the structural potential for

movement mobilization occurs only when political opportunities are open and resources to support the movement are available.

Once this structural potential exists, insurgents must interpret the social environment and conditions as favorable for mobilization, which McAdam referred to as cognitive liberation (McAdam 1982; McAdam and Moore 1989). That is, although structural potential exists, the aggrieved group must recognize this potential and believe that they can create change in order for a social movement to arise. People ultimately recognize such structural potential because of ties with other activists, activist organizations or organizations affiliated with the activist organizations, and prior activism (McAdam 1986, 1989). Broad political changes, increasing size of the indigenous organizations provide the insurgents subtle cues that the political system is vulnerable, and that the movement could actually be successful.

2.2.2. McAdam's Modifications to the Political Process Theory

McAdam made three significant modifications to the political process theory since its inception. He theorized on the role of culture in social movements; he elaborated on the changing foci of the movement; and he theorized on the international context of domestic social movements. McAdam's first drastic modification to the political process theory was in response to critiques about his neglect of culture in the emergence of social movements and the structural biases he perceived in American social movement literature (McAdam 1994). He theorized about cultural opportunities, cultural resources, and cultural framing in social movements. First, he theorized four types of cultural opportunity: (1) the dramatization of a glaring contradiction between a highly salient cultural value and conventional social practices, (2) suddenly imposed grievances , (3) dramatizations of a system's vulnerability or illegitimacy, (4) the availability of

an innovative master frame within which subsequent challengers can map their own grievances and demands (McAdam 1996:25). Secondly, he contended that established organizations or networks have, more or less, a historical activist subculture, which provides the movement with cultural resource from which it can build. Finally, in order for a movement to be successful, he suggested movements, or more specifically, movement leaders, have to present their contention using culturally resonant frames (McAdam 1994). Ultimately, he constructed a cultural process theory for social movements, which was a mirror image of the political process theory.

The second modification that McAdam made was acknowledging the multi-level locus of protest. A social movement directs protest toward the level of government that the insurgents believe is most appropriate for resolving their grievances. He described the four levels of government to which activists direct their grievances: municipal, county, state, and federal (McAdam 1998). In the event of a regional body of government, i.e. the European Union, McAdam and Marx (1996, 1999) argued that the social movement could bypass the state and direct their grievances toward the regional governing body. These modifications leave the original political process model essentially intact; McAdam (1998) and McAdam and Marx (1996, 1999) simply broadened the vertical scope of the theory.

The third significant modification to the political process theory was the addition of an international component. McAdam argued that the multi-level locus of protest and changing political opportunities ultimately determine the direction and duration of a social movement, "but even this expansion in our geographic/institutional approach to locating the sources of change in domestic political opportunity omits another critically important arena within which significant pressures arise… the international and specifically the pressures for change that devolve from perturbations in international political economy" (McAdam 1998:257). Specifically,

international allies could influence the emergence of a domestic social movement, the capacity for domestic protest, and innovative resources for the movement (McAdam1999). In regards to the original framework of the political process theory, McAdam only added an international element to the political opportunity and indigenous organization components. That is, a country's international context can make them more vulnerable to insurgency; in other words, it can provide insurgents with political opportunity. In addition, international contributions and support from other countries can provide insurgents with resources to mobilize and maintain a social movement.

2.3. Criticism of the Political Process Theory

2.3.1. What About the Third World?

The political process theory has become the hegemonic or dominant theory in the study of social movements (Edelman 2001). Scholars have continuously scrutinized the theory and have attempted to apply it to social movements in numerous environments and countries. In spite of this, I have yet to find any systematic critique of the fitness of the political process theory for examining social movements in the Third World. The discussion of the western bias of the political process theory is a peripheral dialogue, at best, and has not been highly scrutinized or received significant attention by political process scholars. However, the logic for such discussion is obvious: the contexts of the numerous social movements that occur within an array of Third World countries are fundamentally different from the context of social movements in the U.S. and Western Europe. However, political process scholars apparently believe apparently

(or implicitly suggest) that social movements can be examined using a standard paradigm that was developed within and designed for social movements in the U.S. and Western Europe.

Although I have not found any systematic critiques of the fitness of the political process theory for examining social movements in the Third World analyses, a number of scholars have provided some clues about some of the problems with applying the political process theory to social movements in the Third World. Boudreau (1996:179) argues, "The analysis of social movements in industrial societies is able to take for granted the existence of states and nationally integrated societies." Crossley (2001) suggests that the political opportunities will vary significantly among democratic and undemocratic countries. However, he does not develop this point in his work; he only acknowledges that the broad structural changes that political opportunity is designed to measure are not as common in advanced industrial democracies. Similarly, Edelman (2001:292) states, "[the political process theory] has less appeal outside developed northern democracies because it was difficult, especially under authoritarian regimes, to imagine political opportunity as a significant explanatory category." However, he too does not elaborate on why it is hard to image political opportunity as a significant explanatory category for examining social movements in the Third World.

Where should such an analysis begin? What are the most appropriate questions for critiquing the applicability of the political process theory for Third World social movements? The first step toward identifying the most appropriate research questions is to examine current critiques of the political process theory that do not focus on western bias per se. The most common criticism about the political process theory is that it is conceptually muddled; that is, the three components of the model are conceptually unclear and subsequently overlap one another. A second common critique is that the political process theory is overly structural. It focuses heavily

on the broad societal processes and neglects individual action. A third critique is that the political process theory neglects or misconstrues the role of culture in social movements.

2.3.2. Conceptual Vagueness, Analytical Narrowness, and the Role of Political Opportunity

Neither McAdam, nor any other political process scholar, has clearly defined political opportunity (or political opportunity structures), mobilizing structures (or indigenous organizations), or frames (or cognitive liberation or cultural framing) as concepts having distinct boundaries among themselves. This conceptual issue can ultimately undermine the usefulness of the political process theory not only for examining social movements in the Third World, but also for examining social movements in any environment. Gamson and Meyer (1996:275) argue, "The concept of political opportunity structure is in trouble, in danger of becoming a sponge that soaks up virtually every aspect of the social movement environment…It threatens to become an all-encompassing fudge factory for al the conditions and circumstances that form the context for collective action. Used to explain so much, it may ultimately explain nothing at all." In McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald's (1996) edited book, McAdam (1996) narrowed down political opportunity to four "highly consensual" dimensions of political opportunities; however, in the same book, Oberschall (1996) adds party-state structure, regime legitimacy, failure of authority, and political liberalization; della Porta (1996) adds policing; and Rucht (1996) adds policy implementation capacity to the dimensions of political opportunity. In addition, Brockett (1991) includes temporal location as a vital component of political opportunity. Ultimately, the concept of political opportunity is broad and vague and, if left unchecked, can lead to fundamental conceptual errors. Moreover, Crossley (2002:121) warns, "Twisting language to maintain focus

upon opportunities does the theory of opportunities a disservice in the long run because it renders the language of opportunity so loose as to make it meaningless."

The notion of political opportunity has not only received criticism for its conceptual vagueness, but also for its narrow emphasis on the political elements in relation to the state. Numerous scholars have argued that political opportunity is important, but the political process theory neglects other types of opportunity that are vital to movement mobilization. For example, Crossley (2002) argues that social movement scholars should also consider media opportunities, as well as opportunities related to social space, psychiatric systems, schools, and workplaces. Wimberley (2002) emphasizes economic opportunities. Goodwin and Jasper (2004) argue for the examination of different types of cultural opportunities.

The conceptual problems are not specific to political opportunity. Framing and mobilizing structures are equally vague. Goodwin and Jasper (2004:11) suggest, "Political opportunities… have suffered the fate that 'resources' often did within resource-mobilization theory: virtually anything, in retrospect, can be seen as having helped a movement mobilize or attain its goals becomes labeled a political opportunity." Anything is reducible to a resource; similarly, anything is reducible to a framing process. Suh (2001) theorizes on perceived opportunities as a unique element from political opportunity and framing; however, McAdam (1982) suggested that perceiving opportunity was an element of cognitive liberation. Moreover, is the media a resource or a framing process? It is arguably both depending on how the scholar wants to examine it. Gamson and Meyer (1996) argue that the media frames events, which can ultimately influence people's perception of the movement. However, Crossley (2002) argues that the media is a type of opportunity structure. Of course, it is equally reasonable to think of the media as a resource for social movements.

Both McAdam and his critics identify political opportunity as the most important component of the political process theory (McAdam 1982, 1983, 1999; Jenkins and Klandermans 1995; Goodwin and Jasper 2004). In addition, although the political process theory has received heavy criticism because of the vagueness of all three components, political opportunity has been a factor in all of the critiques. That is, scholars have criticized the conceptualization of political opportunity alone, but all the criticisms of resource mobilization and framing processes in McAdam's work include reference to political opportunity. Therefore, any critique of the political process theory must begin with a thorough examination of political opportunity.

2.3.3. On Structure and an Implicit Critique of the State

The second popular criticism is that that political process theory has an unwarranted structural bias. Goodwin and Jasper (2004:15) argue that structures are usually defined as "relatively stable and unaffected by movement strategies." However, many of the elements that political process scholars consider structural, or stable, are actually strategic actions. For example, McAdam's (1996:27) notion of "the state's capacity and propensity for repression" is hardly relatively stable feature of a society. Rather, those who hold the state's reins make conscious decisions when to use repressive measures on the population. Pagnucco (1996) identified two types of political opportunity: conjunctural and institutional. Conjunctional opportunities are "changeable factors such as allies," whereas institutional opportunities are "more routine and persisting patterns and rules such as the degree and type of access to the governmental policymaking process" (Pagnucco 1996:6). Pagnucco's two types of political opportunities illuminate the issue: if political opportunity is a structural prerequisite to mobilization, as McAdam argues, strategic actions, such as establishing elite allies or the state's

use of repression, are reduced to intrinsic structural features. Ultimately, the use of the concept of structure is problematic for the notion of political opportunity because it fundamentally involves strategic behavior – i.e., agency – which is not static and is subject to constant change. McAdam is unclear on the structural elements and nonstructural elements of political opportunity.

2.3.4. On Culture and an Implicit Critique of the State

Polletta (1999) criticizes McAdam's neglect of culture in social movements in most of his writings, as well as his attempt to incorporate culture into the political process theory in one of his writings. The issue of culture in the political process theory has received less attention than the two previous criticisms. However, the critique of culture is undoubtedly an important one. McAdam (1994) acknowledges the political, organizational, and structural elements, and argues that culture is an equally important element in social movements. However, he argues that culture is distinct from the other three elements. Polletta (1999) argues that this is a misconception; culture is inseparable from politics and organizations. Moreover, culture is not reducible simply to "agency," but rather is a fundamental component of social structure (Polletta 1999:65). Therefore, McAdam's distinction between political opportunity and cultural opportunity is a fundamental error. Regardless, Polletta (1999) reveals two important points about culture in the political process theory. First, social movement scholars must acknowledge the powerful role of culture in social movements. Secondly, the culture is not simply reducible to agency; it is also a significant component within the macro-level socio-political processes and the state institutions in the given society. Therefore, any study of social movements must consider the unique cultural environment as well as the role of culture within the major institutions in the given society.

2.4. Summary

This literature review of McAdam's work, and critiques of McAdam's work, points to the significant impact of McAdam's work on the development of the study of social movements. More importantly, however, it points out a number of questionable elements of the political process theory that could be fundamentally problematic for examining social movements within Third World countries. That is, this literature review reveals some potential western bias of the political opportunity theory. First, McAdam's conceptualization of political opportunity is the most important feature of the theory, but also one of the most problematic elements of the theory: it is conceptually vague; it neglects other types of opportunities; and it emphasizes only the relationship between the social movement and the state. The second suspicious element is this overemphasis on the state. That is, the political process theory focuses solely on the state and social movements, which neglects other potential challengers and foci of challenge.

How do these issues translate into potential Western biases? First, since the conceptualization of political opportunity is murky, it demands two responses: one, a refinement of the concept by McAdam, and, two, a serious consideration of the western assumptions within the original conceptualization and within McAdam's refinements of political opportunity. That is, is it plausible that political opportunity could take different forms depending on the country and on the movement? The narrower the notion of political opportunity becomes, in the sense that it focuses on relations between social movements and western-style states, the greater the possibility of producing western biases.

Secondly, the socio-political and cultural environment undoubtedly varies from country to country, as well as from social movement to social movement, and the core feature of every

country is its state structure. This literature review illustrates the central role of the state within the political process theory. As I show in chapter five, McAdam reveals little of his assumptions about the state's nature; suffice it to say at this point that the western contexts for which McAdam developed political process theory seem apt to have made the theory and its conception of the state problematic to apply in nonwestern contexts. Moreover, Polleta's (1999) critique of McAdam's conceptualization of the role of culture in the political process theory suggests that he also neglects to examine the role of culture in the state structure itself.

Third, the lack of clarity about what constitutes a social movement has revealed that McAdam believed social movements are fundamentally and explicitly political; the goals of the social movements are aimed at political reform, not revolution; and social movements are inherently directed at the political apparatus (McAdam 1982, 1983, 1989, 1999; McAdam and Marx 1996, 1999; McAdam and Moore 1989). However, I simply ask, is it possible that social movements in the Third World take different forms and focus on different institutions? This question invokes an analysis of the state structure within the given Third World context, and rehashes the issues about the conceptualization of the state in the political process theory that I addressed in the previous paragraph. Is not an aggrieved population in the Third World who directs their grievances and sustained protests at an institution other than the state apparatus a social movement?

Therefore, this literature review leads me to the following research questions about the potential western biases within the political process theory:

- How does McAdam implicitly conceptualize the state, how does he conceptualize the relationship between the state and social movements, and what do these conceptions imply for a political process analysis of Third World social movements?
- How has McAdam refined the notion of political opportunity, and what are the implications of this conceptualization for a political process analysis of Third World social movements?

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Hermeneutics as a Methodology

I use a hermeneutic method for analyzing McAdam's work on the political process theory because it provides a useful method for engaging in discourse with texts. Fuhrman (1980) writes, "The hermeneutical circle consists of a set of arguments that: (1) there is no development of knowledge without foreknowledge; (2) one must anticipate the global meaning of the text… (3) the meaning of the various parts of the text are determined by the global concern; (4) there is a problem of how to get properly into the text" (P. 234). A hermeneutical analysis presupposes that the researcher cannot approach a research project objectively. Since the "social scientist or interpreter and object are linked by a context of tradition – which implies that he already has a pre-understanding of his object as he approaches it, thereby being unable to start with a neutral mind" – objectivity is impossible and the construction of a theory is fundamentally attached to the authors' own biases (Bliecher 1980:8). Gould (1981:22) writes, "Science, since people must do it, is a socially embedded activity." The techniques we employ, the theories we use, and the research questions we ask are historically, culturally, and institutionally specific. Therefore, science is innately social and thus inherently value-laden. Harding (1998) declares, "Since facts -- accepted empirical observations -- are picked out as relevant ones by the theory they are supposed to be testing… and by methods that are relatively inseparable from the theories that lead to their selection, facts can hardly stand as independent, value-, interest-, discourse-, and method-neutral tests of the empirical adequacy of the theory" (P. 144). The product of research, the resulting text, then becomes a cultural artifact, representative of a specific history, a specific institution, and a specific understanding of reality. In a hermeneutical analysis, the task of the

researcher, then, is not to critique the psychology of the author of the text, but to separate the subjective intentions of the author and examine the claims to truth and understanding of reality within text.

The presuppositions of hermeneutical analyses make it the most appropriate method for examining the western bias within McAdam's political process theory. Bliecher (1980) writes, in his introduction to Betti's theory of hermeneutics as a methodology,

> *Hermeneutical theory* focuses on the problematic of a general theory of interpretation as the methodology for the human sciences (or *Geisteswissenschaften*, which includes the social sciences). Through the analysis of *verstehen* as the method appropriate to the re-experiencing or re-thinking of what an author had originally felt or thought, Betti hoped to gain an insight into the process of understanding in general, i.e. how we are able to transpose a meaning-complex created by someone else into our own understanding of… our world. (P. 1)

Recognizing that texts are cultural artifacts, representative of a temporal, geographical, political, cultural, and institutional context, they reflect the prejudices of the times, not necessarily the author's unique views. More to the point, McAdam's work represents a specific understanding of reality. This reality was shaped by the empirical research, as well as his preexisting, yet unconscious, biases. Therefore, since McAdam developed the political process theory in the U.S. based upon his empirical research in the U.S. and Western Europe, it is plausible that his work reflects an inherent eurocentrism.

Harding (1998) clarifies this point by identifying five types of eurocentrism: the overt and covert beliefs and practices that are intentionally pursued by the researcher; institutional eurocentrism, which are the discriminatory practices bound by formal rules and laws within the sciences; societal eurocentrism, which is the eurocentric beliefs held by the larger population; and civilizational and philosophical, which are the eurocentric beliefs held by an entire civilization over an extended period of history. It should be evident that eurocentric scientific

practices are not simply conscious, malicious pursuits. Rather, they are just as likely to be byproducts of the dominant culture. Regardless, a hermeneutic method allows me to examine the western biases within the political process theory, not as a personal critic of McAdam, but as cultural artifacts that have shaped scholars perception of social movement realities.

3.2. Sample

My sample of McAdam's work consists of 10 articles or book chapters and one book. The sample is by no means random; however, I established systematic criterion for choosing each piece for this study. Although the criterion was not elaborate, it should accommodate the research questions at hand. In order to be included in this analysis, each piece must have fulfilled the following criterion:

1. McAdam must use, analyze, or evaluate the political process theory.
2. The article/chapter/book focuses primarily on political opportunities
3. He focuses primarily on the macro-level socio-political processes in social movements.
4. The article/chapter/book focuses on the role of the state in social movements.
5. The article/chapter/book evaluates social movements in countries outside of the U.S. and Western Europe.

All the pieces must meet the first criterion for obvious reasons (i.e. the purpose of my study is to examine the political process theory, not contentious politics or new social movement theory).

Each piece must primarily focus on political opportunities, macro-level socio-political process, the role of the state in social movements, or on social movements in countries outside of the U.S. and Western Europe. Subsequently, my criterion are not intended to include his micro-level analyses on movement involvement, gender differences in participation, and micro-structural factors in movement participation. The 11 sources in table 3.1 met the sample criterion.

Table 3.1. Data Sources

Title	Level of Analysis	Type of Analysis	Methodology	Population
McAdam, Doug. (1982) Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency	Macro-level	Quantitative	Historical Research; Secondary Data Analysis	Black Insurgency in the U.S., 1930-1970
McAdam, Doug. (1983) ***Tactical Innovation and the Pace of Insurgency***	Macro-level	Quantitative	Content Analysis	Insurgent Groups between 1955 and 1970
McAdam, Doug and Kelly Moore. (1989) ***The Politics of Black Insurgency, 1930-1975***	Macro-level	Quantitative	Historical Research; Secondary Data Analysis	Black Insurgency in the U.S., 1930-1975
McAdam, Doug. (1994) ***Culture and Social Movements***	Macro/ Meso/ Micro-level	Qualitative	Theory	All Social Movements
McAdam, Doug. (1996) ***Conceptual Origins, Current Problems, Future Directions***	Macro-level	Qualitative	Theory	Various Authors' Conceptions of the Dimensions of Political Opportunity
McAdam, Doug and Gary Marx. (1996) ***Social Movements and the Changing Structure of Political Opportunity in the European Union***	Macro-Level	Qualitative	Historical- Comparative Analysis	The labor movement, regional movements, the environmental movement, and the anti-nuclear movement within the European Union
McAdam, Doug. (1998a) ***On the International Origins of Domestic Political Opportunities***	Macro-level	Qualitative	Theory	Civil Rights Movement
McAdam, Doug. (1998b) ***The Future of Social Movements***	Macro-level	Qualitative	Theory	All Social Movements
McAdam, Doug. (1999) ***Revisiting the Civil Rights Movement***	Macro-level	Qualitative	Theory	Civil Rights Movement
McAdam, Doug and Gary Marx. (1999) ***On the Relationship of Political Opportunities to the Form of Collective Action: The Case of the European Union***	Macro-Level	Qualitative	Historical- Comparative Analysis	The labor movement, regional movements, the environmental movement, and the anti-nuclear movement within the European Union
McAdam, Doug. (2003) ***Beyond Structural Analysis: Toward a More Dynamic Understanding of Social Movements***	Macro/ Meso/ Micro-level	Qualitative	Theory	All Social Movements

McAdam (1982) originally constructed the political process theory from a macro-level analysis of black insurgency. He followed his initial work with two more macro-level analyses to defend his new paradigm. In two out of the three macro-level analyses of black insurgency in his earlier writings, McAdam (1982) and McAdam and Moore (1989) examined the historical, political, social, and economic processes that influenced the emergence, development, and decline of black insurgency in the U.S.. He utilized data on large-scale demographic, economic, and political phenomena to test path models for insurgency. In the third macro-analytic article, McAdam (1986) analyzed tactical innovations among insurgent groups using data from a content analysis of story synopses in the *New York Times Index*. Specifically, he examined interaction between insurgent groups in the civil rights movement and the state between 1955 and 1970. These three pieces were the only articles and books that McAdam published in the 1980s that met the criterion for this study.

Since 1990, McAdam has published seven articles that meet the criterion for this study. One piece emphasized the role of culture in social movements (McAdam 1994). This piece meets the criterion in two ways. First, McAdam spent a significant amount of time theorizing on cultural opportunities and the macro-level cultural context of a social movement. In addition, eight of the 28 social movements that McAdam referenced in the development of his argument were in countries outside of the U.S. and Western Europe: three examples were from social movements in China, four examples were from social movements in the former Soviet-Union and Eastern Europe, and one example was from a social movement in Latin America.

Three of the articles are macro-level analyses of the international and regional context of political opportunities, two of which McAdam coauthored with Gary Marx (McAdam and Marx 1996, 1998). In a sole-authored piece, McAdam (1998a) examined the multi-level loci of protest

within America during the civil rights movement, along with the role and effect of international pressure and alliances in movement activity. Although his purpose in this piece was not to empirically test his theory, he did provide a brief anecdotal case study to support his argument. This piece met the criterion because it emphasizes the role of the state in social movements. In the two co-authored articles, McAdam and Marx (1996; 1999) examined the changes in the arrangements of institutionalized power resulting from European integration. They examined the relationship between four distinct movements and the European Union: the labor movement, regional movements, the environmental movement, and the anti-nuclear movement. The distinction between the two pieces is that they focused on the context of political opportunities within a regional governing body, the European Union, in the first article (McAdam and Marx 1996), whereas in the second article they focused on the changing political opportunities as well as changing forms of collective action in light of the development of the European Union (McAdam and Marx 1998). Both articles were historical-comparative analyses. They examined the history of the four previously mentioned movements and compared them based on the forms of protest, the foci of protest, and the political opportunities available to each movement.[i]

McAdam (1996) attempted to refine the conceptual parameters of political opportunities. He established four influential factors that shape the context of political opportunities. Although he did not conduct any analyses to verify his suspicions about these factors, he briefly examined how five other scholars have conceptualized political opportunities. This article was a rather obvious piece for my study because McAdam directly examines political opportunities.

[i] I could not find a significant logical or conceptual divergence from McAdam's other work in his co-authored work with both Moore (McAdam and Moore 1989) and Marx (McAdam and Marx 1996, 1998). Therefore, I do not believe I am compromising the validity of my analysis of McAdam's work by including his co-authored articles with Moore and Marx.

McAdam (1999; 2003) began reevaluating the framework of the political process theory. He theorized that the political process theory was not dynamic and overly structural. However, he never conducted any empirical analyses using these new theories. In one article (1999), he applied his newly developed theory anecdotally to the civil rights movement. In another article (2003), he only provides logical instructions for employing his new model. I chose both of these articles because he explicitly examined the political process theory and paid special attention to political opportunities and the dynamic processes within social movements.

The final article that I chose for this study was McAdam's only article in which he theorizes on social movements in countries outside of the U.S. and Western Europe. Specifically, he (1998b) examined the future of social movements and theorized on the global spread of social movements. The suggestive support for his conclusions, however, were only a brief two-paragraph summary of the democracy movement in Burma, a few-sentence summary of the Chinese student movement 1989, and one-sentence examples of social movements in Eastern Europe, South Africa, Brazil, and Ecuador. Regardless, this is the only article on the political process theory where McAdam explicitly addresses social movements outside of the U.S. and Western Europe. Since he explicitly examined (or theorized on) social movements outside of the U.S. and Western Europe, this article undoubtedly met the qualifying criterion.

3.3. Research Design

As the hermeneutic circle consists of a reflexive examination of parts as both independent from the whole and fundamental to the whole, the primary elements of this analysis must be the concepts, terms, and definitions that are the parts that make up the political process theory. A hermeneutic analysis thus requires special attention to the use of definitions and terms and the

construction of concepts, as they are the parts that constitute the political process theory. Therefore, to establish a consistent, systematic approach to such an analysis, I constructed a protocol to guide me through McAdam's writings and to serve as a reminder of the important analytic elements. Moreover, as it is easy to become captivated by writing styles, topics, analyses, etc, and unintentionally overlook important terms, concepts, and definitions, the protocol will increase the likelihood of analyzing each piece with the same analytic rigor. I do not use the protocol as definitive categories or as the only important categories, but rather as an analytic aid to guide me through the readings.

The protocol consists of two primary categories that reflect the theme of this study – (1) the state and (2) political opportunity (see table 3.2 for a summary of the protocol). The overlap within and among these categories should be apparent, but, again, since the categories are simply sensitizing elements to guide my analysis, the overlap is operationally insignificant.

Table 3.2: Summary of Research Protocol

Category One: The State
Definitions of the State
Democracy
Freedom and Equality
Legitimacy
Military and/or Police Forces
Political, Economic, and/or Social Stability
International Context
Category Two: Political Opportunity
Conceptual and Operational Definitions of Political Opportunity
Level of Analysis
Type of Analysis
Methodology
Population

3.3.1. The State

The first category of the protocol provides guidelines for examining McAdam's conceptualization of the structure and context of the state apparatus in the political process theory. This task requires an analysis of McAdam's interpretations of the institutional framework of the state, the broader political context of the country, and the citizenry's perception of the state.

Explicit or Implicit Definitions of the State. I expect that explicit definitions of the state may be unlikely throughout most of McAdam's work, since his emphasis was social movements, not the state. Therefore, I must examine the parts that make up the whole, i.e. the terms and concepts that indirectly or implicitly paint a picture of the state. To capture his interpretation of the state, I will look for signifiers, sensitizing terms, or concepts that may have significant implications for the state. The concepts and terms that I included in the protocol are by no means exhaustive, only those terms and concepts that I felt were most telling of McAdam's conception of the state. In Chapter 4, I will document how the term or concept is used, what he was referring to with the term or concept, how it relates to the state, and how he applies it to the political process theory (or how he applies the political process theory to the term or concept). The factors are as follows:

Democracy. While this factor could be included in McAdam's explicit definition of the state, the concept of democracy within the state demands special attention as democracy in the U.S. and Western Europe differs greatly from democracy in the Third World. In fact, democracy is simply nonexistent in many Third World countries. The state system not only affects the relationship between the state and social movements, it defines the broader political and social environment

within the country. By identifying McAdam's use of democracy in reference to the government, I can understand his conceptualization of the state structure more clearly and see how he applies his understanding of the state structure to the political process theory. Specifically, how important is democracy in McAdam's analysis? Does he explicitly address the role of a democratic system in his analysis or does he assume that a democratic system exists? How does his understanding of democracy in the state influence his understanding of the political process theory?

Freedom and Equality. Freedom and equality are fundamental principles of democracy. However, in practice, freedom can be significantly repressed and inequality can abound even in so-called democratic countries (e.g., Jim Crow segregation in the U.S.). In a predominantly non-democratic country, freedom and equality may have fundamentally different meanings, which could ultimately impact the relationship between a social movement and the state. How does McAdam address, both implicitly and explicitly, freedom and equality in his analyses of social movements? Do his assumptions about freedom and equality shape his conceptualization of the political process theory?

Legitimacy. Democracy, freedom, and equality influence the legitimacy of the state; McAdam's discussions of state legitimacy illuminate his understanding of the state and of relationships between the state and social movements. In a Third World context, the citizenry may not consider the state structure itself legitimate because of its origins in colonialism, which might present a fundamentally different relationship between the state and social movements. In other words, how does McAdam say the state maintains legitimacy among its citizenry? Is the state

considered legitimate among the citizenry? Does he address the legitimacy of the state in reference to popular or unpopular policies or administrations? Does he discuss the legitimacy of the state structure itself?

Military and/or Police Forces. How does McAdam address the role of the military and police forces in the political process theory? Is the military or police forces treated as complimentary of the state structure or antagonistic to it? In the U.S. and Western Europe, the military is highly bureaucratized within the government structure. However, in many Third World countries, the military and police forces have a certain degree of autonomy and can occasionally act in defiance of the state (e.g., military coups in Chile in 1973, Thailand in 1976, Nigeria in 1985, or São Tomé and Príncipe in 2003). McAdam's treatment of the relationship between military and police forces and the state can further clarify his conceptualization of the structure of the state and the state's response to social movements; moreover, it could shape how he interprets the tactics of social movements.

Political, Economic, and/or Social Stability. The degree of political, economic, and social stability can influence significantly the trajectory of a social movement as well as the state's response to the movement. Therefore, I examine McAdam's account and interpretations of the political, economic, and/or social stability within the population of his analysis. I am especially concerned with McAdam's treatment of systemic or structural instability of the state. Unlike the U.S. and Western Europe, many Third World states are arguably fundamentally unstable and oftentimes face constant threat of military coups, popular revolts, or severe economic inequality, and may produce a fundamentally different relationship between the state and social movements.

International Context. Because Third World countries are typically dominated politically, economically, and in other ways by foreign entities, one must understand a Third World country's international milieu -- that is, its role relations with other countries -- to understand events inside that country's borders. To what extent is the country independent from other powerful countries? What is the relationship between the country and the international financial institutions, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, or the World Trade Organization? Moreover, to what extent does McAdam refer to this international context at all?

3.3.2. Political Opportunity

The second category of the protocol provides guidelines for examining McAdam's work on political opportunities. Since McAdam has published a wealth of scholarly work on political opportunity, identifying multiple explicit definitions of political opportunity should not be a challenge. The goal here is to explore the fitness of McAdam's conceptualization of political opportunity for examining Third World social movements. With this goal in mind, I have identified a number of factors that I can use to tease out potential bias in his conceptualization of political opportunity.

Conceptual and Operational Definitions of Political Opportunity. The first task is to account for McAdam's explicit conceptual and operational definitions of political opportunity throughout his work. How did he define and operationalize the concept, and how did he refine the definition over time?

Level and Type of Analysis, Methodology, and Population. Any fair critique of a concept such as political opportunity requires a thorough examination of the impact of the empirical analysis and the data for which the concept was developed and refined. Although I described the level of analysis, type of analysis, methodology, and population for the works used in this project earlier in this chapter, I now account for how McAdam specifically developed his understanding of political opportunity based on these factors, for these four factors defined the context in which McAdam constructed and refined the notion of political opportunity. First, how did the level of analysis influence his conceptualization of political opportunity? What elements could he have missed using such level of analysis? Second, what empirical evidence did he provide to support his claims about political opportunity? Third, what are the implications of the type of data he used and his data collection procedures for constructing or refining his conceptualization of political opportunity? Fourth, and most importantly, what features of the given population did McAdam use to support and/or develop his notion of political opportunity?

3.4. Structure of Analysis

The structure of my analysis in chapter 4 follows the structure of the protocol. Chapter 4 consists of two analyses: (1) an analysis of McAdam's conception of the state and (2) an analysis of political opportunity. In both sections, recognizing that each text only represents a specific moment in McAdam's developing perspective, I examine the refinement process of the political process theory, as well as the consistencies and contradictions in McAdam's work over time. I follow these analyses with a synthesized discussion of my observations as they relate specifically to social movements in the Third World.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF THE STATE AND POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY

4.1. On the State

4.1.1. Defining the State

McAdam's (1982) conceptualization of the state was embedded in a theoretical framework of power relations. He argued that power is concentrated within the hands of a few wealthy groups, and this power coalesces within the state apparatus. The state represents the center of political and economic power, yet only a small group of elites controls this power. Subsequently, the majority of the population does not have any real influence in major political decisions. However, the degree of elite power over the state is relative to the elites' power relationship with other groups in society. If the seemingly powerless are able to mobilize in a way as to increase their power relative to the state, the elite group will be forced to concede. Therefore, the state is the center of political and economic power, controlled by a small group of elites, and is always contestable ground (McAdam 1982:36-37).

McAdam (1982) outlined his theory of the state in his initial book on the political process theory, but only explicitly addressed the nature of the state on two other occasions (McAdam and Marx 1996, 1999). On both occasions, McAdam and Marx (1996, 1999) explored the relationship between the development of the nation-state and social movements. I examine the actual relationship between the social movement and the state later in this chapter; however, important here is his use of the terms 'the nation-state' and 'the modern democratic state'.

McAdam's most explicit statements about the nation-state and the modern democratic state were in his works with Gary Marx. McAdam and Marx (1996) stated, 'The modern social movement form arose historically in response to the emergence of the *modern nation-state*" (P. 250; emphasis mine). Moreover, they argued, "the *modern, democratic state* was as much an outcome as the architect of [the shifting locus and nature of collective action]" (McAdam and Marx 1996:252; emphasis mine). In a later article, McAdam and Marx (1999) stated "…social movements… developed in response to the rise of the *modern democratic state*" (P. 97; emphasis mine). The later quotes are McAdam's most explicit statements about the correlation between the nation state and the democratic state.

From these statements one can see that, first, they began their analysis acknowledging that the modern social movement form arose alongside the development of the modern nation-state (1996:250), yet only two pages later, they assumed the modern nation state was in fact the modern 'democratic state' (1996:252). In 1999, they confirmed their position that social movements arose alongside the development of the democratic state (McAdam and Marx 1999:97). Therefore, they used the nation state and the democratic state synonymously, which suggests one of three possible readings: (1) all nation states are democratic states, (2) social movements only occur in democratic states, or (3) McAdam and Marx are providing a eurocentric account of the history of the nation state, as I explain below.

Certainly, not all nation states are democratic. In fact, according to Freedom House, only 63% of the world's states are electoral democracies (Kartnycky 2002).[ii] Western European nation states and the U.S. are democratic states; however, the majority of Third World states are

[ii] Freedom House characterizes electoral democracies "by a range of competing political parties with alternative programs, the ability of these parties to raise and use resources in open political campaigns, and a free and fair election process… [they] require a diffusion of power among different branches of government and a regular cycle of elections in an environment in which an orderly change of the political elite among competing groups is possible" (Kartnycky 2002: 318). This conceptualization of the democratic state is admittedly uncritical.

undemocratic, or at least less democratic. On this point, McAdam and Marx's (1996, 1999) conceptualization of the nation state is accurate in regards to the Western nation state, but inaccurate in regards to the multitude of Third World states.

It would be plausible to think that McAdam and Marx (1996) were suggesting that social movements only occur in democratic states; however, McAdam (1996, 1998) explicitly acknowledged the protest activities in Chile, Burma, the Philippines, and China -- all of which were undemocratic states -- were social movements, which contradicts the notion that social movements only occur in democratic states:

> Anyone who doubts this point [that repression is a significant factor in political opportunity] would do well to reflect for a moment on the fate of the 1989 Chinese student movement. (McAdam 1996:28)

In addition, McAdam (1998b) wrote, "We are referring to the spread of the modern social movement form in nondemocratic, nonwestern settings" (P. 235). He continued, "The Burmese movement featured most of the earmarks of as western-style social movement… We could multiply our list of examples indefinitely- the anti-Marcos movement in the Philippines… the 'mothers movement' that developed in Chile in 1979" (McAdam 1998:235).The only other explanation for using the terms 'nation state' and democratic state' synonymously that I find plausible is that they were simply providing a eurocentric explanation of the history of the nation state.

Secondly, McAdam and Marx (1996) considered the modern nation state as the antithesis of the *ancien régime*, or traditional rule, which implied a dichotomy between the *ancien régime* and the modern nation state. They characterized the *ancien régime* as local, decentralized political power, with the lack of national level administration, whereas the nation-state consisted of the centralization of government and rule and the encapsulation of everyday life into the state

(McAdam and Marx 1996:252). After stating that the modern nation state developed from the *ancien régime*, McAdam and Marx (1996) subtly shifted their language from addressing the 'nation state' to addressing the 'democratic state' and from addressing the '*ancien régime*' to discussing the 'monarchical state': "Whereas the earlier monarchical states rested on the notion of divine right, the modern democratic state governed at the behest 'of the people'" (McAdam and Marx 1996:253). Therefore, the *ancient régime* was characterized as the monarchial state- a traditional state structure common in Western Europe- and the modern nation-state was understood to be the democratic state- a modern state structure in the U.S. and Western Europe. The traditional/ modern, or monarchical/ democratic, dichotomy only accounts for the unique history of the development of the Western nation-state. The development of Third World states certainly did not follow such a path. In fact, the nation-state was a Western construction introduced to the Third World through colonialism or neo-colonialism; European colonizers even defined the boundaries of Third World nation-states. Therefore, one must take into account that the transition from tradition rule to the nation-state in the Third World varies greatly depending upon the given country, the form of colonization, the European colonizers, the traditional rule, the manner through which the country gained independence from the colonizer, and so on. The point is that McAdam's conceptual understanding of the development of the nation state reflected a Eurocentric reading and understanding. .

The theoretical framework that undergirds McAdam's definition of the state is not especially problematic, in as much as the state is always contestable ground, yet monopolized by the wealthy and powerful elites. However, McAdam and Marx (1996, 1999) were implicitly accounting for the specific history of Western-style democratic states, not all nation-states. Although McAdam provided examples of movements in the Third World (McAdam 1996,

1998a, 1998b), McAdam and Marx (1996, 1999) did not take into account the unique history of the Third World state when explaining the rise of the nation-state. Their traditional/modern, or monarchical/democratic, dichotomy for the development of the nation state presents a eurocentric conceptualization of the state. The colonial and neo-colonial histories of most Third World countries are far more complex than McAdam and Marx's modern/traditional dichotomy. Moreover, many Third World countries do not even meet the most uncritical standards for being a democratic state. Ultimately, if McAdam based his conceptualization of the state (or the nation state) on the Western democratic state then his conceptualization of the political process (i.e., relationship between the state and social movement) will most likely reflect the specific political process within the Western democratic state. Such western biases could have profound implications for the fitness of the political process theory for examining Third World social movements.

4.1.2. Democracy and the Political Process Theory

The primary state apparatus that McAdam examined was the U.S. political system. Accordingly, he generally based his understanding of the role of the state in social movements on a specific conception of democracy within the U.S. political structure. However, he never scrutinized the underlying features of the U.S. democratic system or its implications for the political process theory. Consequently, he held a number of elements constant when examining the role of the state in social movements: (1) a two-party electoral system, (2) a democratic process within the institutional parameters of the state, (3) a cultural and institutional value system of democracy, freedom, and equality, (4) an inherently stable political system.

First, the electoral system in the U.S. was central to McAdam's analyses. Specifically, in his work on black insurgency in the U.S., he continuously emphasized the role of electoral power in the political process (McAdam 1982; 1999; 1998a; McAdam and Moore 1989). For example, McAdam (1982) accounted for black powerlessness between 1896 and 1928 as follows: "The compromise [of 1876] serves as a convenient historical referent marking the point in time at which the question of the sociopolitical status of black Americans was consciously 'organized out' of national politics. … By the mid-1890s the black vote had come to be a liability [for Democrats] rather than an asset in southern electoral politics" (Pp. 66-68). In addition, McAdam (1982) argued, "Disenfranchisement adversely effected black political prospects in three ways" (P. 69). McAdam (1982) suggested, first, "It destroyed their ability to bargain for political and economic gains" (P. 69). In addition, he argued, "it rendered the exercise of violent control measures against blacks increasingly likely by eliminating the threat of electoral reprisals against parties responsible" (P. 69). Finally, he wrote, "because of their small numbers outside the South… disenfranchisement had the practical effect of eliminating blacks as an electoral force at the national level as well" (P. 69). McAdam (1982) continued,

> Republican party leaders had sought to broaden their southern electoral appeal by withdrawing support for controversial Reconstruction efforts. This decision reflected a growing devaluation of the so called 'radical' Republican vote-including the black vote… (P. 69)
>
> For blacks, [Republican abandonment of the South] proved disastrous…Thus, in the period from 1896 to 1928, the geographic alignment of political loyalties, coupled with disenfranchisement, destroyed whatever chance blacks might have had of mobilizing any semblance of national electoral leverage. (P.70)

McAdam and Moore's (1989) analysis of the decline of black insurgency between 1966 and 1975 is a second example of the centrality of electoral politics in the political process theory: McAdam and Moore (1989) argued that the perceived threat of black demands "manifested itself in the mass defection of traditional supporters of the Democratic party… The result of this defection was a devaluation of the black vote as both parties weighed the advantages of counting the black vote against the costs of alienating a large, and increasingly expanding, segment of the white population" (P. 275-276). The electoral system was the operational backbone of McAdam's analysis of the political process theory; he measured the rise, development, and decline of black insurgency based on the increase or decrease of the electoral power of blacks.

While the electoral system is a good measure of political power within an advanced industrial democracy, it is unsuitable for assessing and understanding political power in nondemocratic or less democratic countries. Moreover, even in semi-democratic, or pseudo-democracies, within the Third World, the electoral process is fundamentally different from the U.S. democratic system, e.g., larger numbers of political parties. Therefore, measuring political power in terms of electoral systems lacks some or all validity in many Third World countries.

Secondly, McAdam's emphasis on electoral politics helps clarify his understanding of the institutional parameters of the state. Intrinsic to McAdam's understanding of the institutional framework of the state is the notion of a strong and stable democratic process. That is, a democratic process exists within the institutional framework of the state; the challenge is to make that institutional framework responsive to movement beneficiaries. McAdam (1982), quoting Schattschneider, wrote, "All forms of political organization have a bias in favor of the exploitation of some kinds of conflict and the suppression of others because organization is the

mobilization of bias" (P. 66). He (1982) stated further, "some issues are organized into politics while others are organized out… [and] black Americans was consciously 'organized out' of national politics" (P. 66). If blacks achieved electoral leverage, they could work within the institutional framework of the state. However, if a group did not have electoral power, it was likely that their voices would go unheard within the institutional political system; therefore, the aggrieved group would have to pursue tactics outside of the formal state apparatus, i.e., noninstitutional forms of political participation. McAdam (1983) further clarified this point by citing Piven and Cloward: "[I]t is usually when unrest among the lower classes breaks out of the confines of the electoral procedures that the poor may have some influence, for the instability and polarization the then threaten to create by their actions in the factories or in the streets may force some response from electoral leaders" (P. 736). The electoral process appears to define the parameters of the state. In fact, the electoral leaders within the democratic process and the electoral process itself appear to be two important elements of the state in the political process theory.

Although McAdam never provided an operational definition of democracy, it is apparent that throughout his writings he distinguished between the democratic polity and the political processes therein. Given that McAdam approached his analyses from a critical perspective and stated clearly that, "The political process model is also based on a particular conception of power in America" (McAdam 1982:36), he distinguished the type of polity from the actual democratic processes within the polity, which he believed were accessible by the social elites, but relatively inaccessible to the masses. If a small group of wealthy elites in fact controls the democratic polity, it plausible to argue also that the democratic polity is open to and serves the interests of this group; however, this same democratic polity is closed to those who do not serve the interests

of the governing elites. McAdam (1999) argued, “Should unorganized and/or non-political groups mobilize in highly certain times, they will almost always confront a closed or unresponsive political system” (P. xxiv). In addition, he contended, “In nominally democratic contexts, challenges of this sort are very likely ignored. In non-democratic settings, this kind of challenge is almost always illegal and thus, an invitation to repression by the state authorities” (McAdam 1999:xxiv).Therefore, McAdam was implying that a democratic process does exist within the state, but only for this small group of elites and those who serve the interests of this group.

However, in these quotes, when he explicitly referred to "the non-democratic settings" that are common outside the West, McAdam was also pointing out another important feature of the state. On occasion, McAdam made subtle references to differences between democratic and nondemocratic settings, but this quote is an exemplar of the primary distinction he made. Here, he was referring to the responsiveness of the state. Note that McAdam first stated that in certain times, i.e., relatively calm political, economic, and social climates, challenging groups will most likely face a closed or unresponsive system; however, the closed and unresponsive system was not the feature that distinguished democratic from undemocratic countries. The distinction between democratic and nondemocratic countries was the state’s response to the social movement. In other words, McAdam was not arguing that the democratic states have an open system; in fact, elsewhere he argued quite the opposite.[iii] Rather, he was suggesting that the political process *within* the institutionalized political system is structured differently. More to the point, he was implicitly referring to the presence or absence of a democratic process within the

[iii] “Under ordinary circumstances, excluded groups, or challengers, face enormous obstacles in their efforts to advance group interests. Challengers are excluded from routine decision-making processes precisely because their bargaining position, relative to established polity members, is so weak. But the particular set of power relationships that define the political environment at any point in time hardly constitute an immutable structure of political life…” (McAdam 1982: 40).

institutional state structure; however, he never addressed it as such. Therefore, while he did address differences between democratic and nondemocratic countries in regards to state response (McAdam 1999), bureaucratic structure (McAdam 1998b), and social movement forms (McAdam 1998a), he never attempted to explain why these differences exist. Implicitly, he was arguing that they exist because of differences in the political process within the *institutionalized* political structure. Therefore, since the majority of his work was on social movements in the U.S. and Western Europe, the existence of a democratic process *within* the institutional state structure is an implicit, yet inherent, feature of the political process theory.

To illustrate this point, in the U.S., for example, the state will most likely ignore the grievances of a movement rather than respond with oppressive tactics. Responding to a movement with violence or repression would contradict the underlying cultural values of democracy, freedom and equality, as well as the institutional democratic values in the U.S. Constitution. If the state contradicts both the cultural values of democracy, freedom, and equality and the institutional democratic laws, the administration is liable to loss its social and political legitimacy. However, in a nondemocratic settings such as Chile under General Pinochet's military rule, the government never expressed democratic values; therefore, when organizations formed, they not only came up against a closed political system, they were often violently repressed by military forces. In spite of the socio-cultural democratic value systems common among Chileans, the regime maintained control through intimidation, violence, and repression. Therefore, the distinction that McAdam made between democratic and nondemocratic settings referred to issues of state legitimacy, which is an incredibly important point when examining the Third World state. However, McAdam never examined how this might profoundly affect the

relationship between the state and social movements, and, more important here, how it profoundly affects the structure of the political process theory.

Thirdly, implicit in all of his work, is the notion of underlying *ideal* cultural value systems of democracy, freedom, and equality; the public was framed as constantly expecting the government to adhere to ideal values of democracy, freedom, and equality. That is, challenged groups would frame their claims in terms of issues of democracy, freedom, and equality. To maintain legitimate claim to state power, the political elites had to respond to the claims against the state acting in an undemocratic or unequal manner, or find a strategy for avoiding or otherwise ignoring their claims. Two brief examples should suffice to support this claim. First, in reference to the Albany campaign in 1961, McAdam (1983) wrote, "What was absent during the campaign was the pattern of reactive segregationist violence and subsequent federal intervention evident in the freedom rides" (P. 748). Thus, "while systematically denying demonstrators their rights, [Police Chief] Prichett nonetheless did so in such a way as to prevent the type of major disruption that would have prompted federal intervention" (McAdam 1982: 748). Secondly, in reference to M. L. King's decision to protest in Birmingham in 1965, McAdam (1982) wrote, 'No doubt, a part of this fuller understanding was a growing awareness of the importance of white violence as a stimulus to federal involvement… In response to this consistent breakdown in public order, the federal government was *forced* to intervene in support of black interests" (P. 178). McAdam (1982) later documented that, "Two days later [President Johnson] submitted to Congress a tough voting bill containing several provisions that movement leaders had earlier been told were politically too unpopular to be incorporated into legislative proposals. The bill passed by overwhelming margins in both the Senate and the House and was signed into law" (P. 179; emphasis mine).

McAdam was not clear about the 'type' of disruption that would provoke federal intervention or about what 'breakdown in public order' would 'force' federal intervention. However, he was implicitly referring to constitutionally supported values of democracy, freedom, and equality, as well as the legitimacy of the state. In the first example, McAdam did refer to the denial of the demonstrators' rights, i.e., their constitutionally guaranteed rights to organize and freedom of speech; however, the local Sheriff repressed the demonstrators' rights in a manner in which the government's legitimacy was not threatened. In the second example, the federal government was forced to intervene in the Birmingham protests because it had the responsibility to uphold the constitutional rights of the demonstrators, regardless whether the political elites supported the black interest or not. The clear point here is that the insurgent groups exercised their constitutional rights, i.e., the right to organize and freedom of speech, recognizing that if they were repressed in a violent manner, the federal government would be forced to step in. McAdam used the term 'forced' to suggest that if the federal government did not respond, the legitimacy of the administration would be severely compromised. McAdam and Marx (1996) wrote, "Whereas the earlier monarchical states rested on the notion of divine right, the modern democratic state governed at the behest 'of the people'… The state's claim to legitimate authority depended upon it being seen as a responsible steward vis-à-vis various client publics" (P. 253). Ultimately, legitimacy and ideal values of democracy, freedom, and equality were underlying theme in McAdam's conceptualization of the state and, subsequently, the political process theory.

The issues of state legitimacy within McAdam's conceptualization of the state hint at two other salient issues that McAdam never directly addressed: (1) the role of military and police forces in the political process and (2) structural stability of the political system. As I previously

showed, the excessive use of military and police forces to control public demonstrations could greatly compromise the legitimacy of the state and the public's perception of the legitimacy of the administration. McAdam (1982:222) wrote, "that the urban riots of the mid 1960s did help to stimulate a reactive pattern of favorable federal action across a wide range of policy areas of interest to blacks. However, such efforts did not exhaust the federal response to urban disorders of this period." In addition, McAdam (1982:223) stated, "the late 1960s were marked by intensified social-control efforts designed to contain the expanding threat posed by riots." In fact, McAdam (1982) illustrated that, "at the federal level, this social-control emphasis was evident in… antiriot provisions… establishment of a national training center to instruct local police in riot control techniques…National Guard units…riot control training… U.S. Army [assignment of] to riot control duty" (P. 223). The degree of military and police presence and use of force is proportional to the public perception of illegitimate collective action, i.e., protests, riots, sit-ins, and so on. Thus, in a democratic setting, the use of military and police force is contingent on the threat the collective action poses to the cultural and institutional democratic values.

However, I contend that the use of military and police force by the state is dependent upon the structural stability of the political system, which brings me to my fourth and final point on democracy's place in political process theory. Throughout all of McAdam's writings, he referred to the threat social movements may pose for administrations, presidential candidates, and political parties, but never to the threats social movements may pose to the fundamental structure of the political system. For example, during the elections of 1956, 1960, and 1964, presidential candidates had to target the black vote if they wanted the presidency (McAdam 1982). Because of the increased importance of the black vote, if an official was seeking reelection, she or he had to support policy in the interests of blacks while in office (McAdam

1983). In addition, McAdam discussed international threats to administrations and foreign relations, but never to the basic fabric of the U.S. political system. For example, McAdam (1998) suggested, "In the context of the Cold War, this nearly universal condemnation of American-style racism had its effect on U.S. policy. Motivated by foreign policy concerns, new allies began to emerge within the federal government and to voice support for policy change" (P. 264). Therefore, McAdam never identified any threats to the fundamental stability of the political system. Rather, he assumed that the state was fundamentally stable, which is a reasonable conclusion when examining an advanced industrial democracy.

The connection between the use of military and police forces becomes a more important topic when considering the structure of the Third World state. Third World states tend to face chronic political, social, and economic instability, while simultaneously attempting to maintain legitimacy, not only among the citizenry, but also among state officials themselves. Many political systems in the Third World are under constant threat of military coups or popular uprisings. Moreover, Third World states tend to have high rates of poverty, illnesses, infant mortality, and unemployment. Combining these extreme social, political, and economic conditions with the fact that the majority of the Third World states are semi-democratic or nondemocratic, and recognizing that even countries that have constitutions that honor freedom and equality often do not honor them in practice, the use of military and police forces to extinguish social movements become understandable. Therefore, McAdam (1982, 1983, 1998) expressed that although black insurgents feared violence and repression from supremacy groups and even local governments, they also believed that if these groups were violent the federal government would have to step in. However, in the Third World context, these assumptions are unwarranted. In fact, many Third World regimes use military and police presence and extreme

military and police force to maintain social control over their citizenry and to establish control through fear. Ultimately, McAdam's conceptualization of the state assumed an inherent stability of the political system; however, recognizing that the state structure in many Third World countries are under constant threat of collapse (e.g. Somolia, 1991) or a military coup d'état (e.g. Thailand, 1991; Chile, 1979) and face varying degrees of economic and social instability, McAdam's conceptualization of the state becomes problematic.

4.2. On Political Opportunity

For the sake of clarity, I split the analysis of McAdam's conceptualization of political opportunity structures into two parts: (1) his work from the inception of the political process theory to the end of the 1980s (developmental stage) and (2) his work in the 1990s and beyond (refinement stage). Throughout the 1980s, McAdam was establishing the political process theory. However, beginning in the 1990s, McAdam shifted his emphasis from simply presenting and testing his initial theory to refining the components of the political process theory.

4.2.1. Developmental Stage

McAdam's (1982) earliest conceptualization of political opportunity was vague and, thus, potentially all encompassing, which spilled over into an equally vague operational definition. He explained the theoretical perspective that underscored the terms:

> Under ordinary circumstances, excluded groups, or challengers, face enormous obstacles in their efforts to advance group interests. Challengers are excluded from routine decision-making processes precisely because their bargaining position, relative to established polity members, is so weak. But the particular set of power relationships that define the political environment at any point in time hardly constitute an immutable structure of political life… (McAdam 1982:40)

Here, McAdam reinforced his notion that the state is controlled by a small number of wealthy elites and that the majority of the population is excluded from the institutional political process. Moreover, he clearly believed the state apparatus was contestable ground, and in certain instances, the political system is open for those groups who are normally excluded from the institutional political process.

His conceptualization of political opportunity in his first piece was vague, and even difficult to identify. In fact, his conceptual definition was arguably the same as his operational definition. McAdam (1982) wrote, "The opportunities for a challenger to engage in successful collective action do vary greatly over time. And it is these variations that are held to be related to the ebb and flow of movement activity" (P. 41). He (1982) argued further that, "A finite list of specific causes [for shifting political opportunity structures] would be impossible to compile… The point is that any event or broad social process that serves to undermine the calculations and assumptions on which the political establishment is structured occasions a shift in political opportunities" (P. 41). He (1982:41) claimed that the most disrupting processes and events are "wars, industrialization, international political realignments, prolonged unemployment, and widespread demographic changes." McAdam's conceptual definition of political opportunity is, thus, the opening of institutional political space for previously excluded groups. He operationalized political opportunity as anything that weakens the political establishment and increases the power of the movement.

The conceptual and operational vagueness of the concept presented fundamental problems throughout his analysis. For example, McAdam (1982) referred to two other types of opportunities: economic and occupational opportunities. These two terms are not problematic in and of themselves; however, within the context of his book, they weaken the power of the notion

of political opportunity structures. McAdam (1982:96) suggested, "Like the parallel northward migration, this regional movement was fueled by a mix of 'push' and 'pull' factors…The pull was the result of expanding *economic opportunities* in urban areas." McAdam (1982) continued,

> Through a combination, then, of decreased demand for agricultural labor and expanding *occupational opportunities* in urban areas, southern blacks were transformed, in the period from 1930 to 1960, from a predominately rural to urban population segment… The demographic processes reviewed here acted to stimulate development in two principal ways. First, the collapse of the cotton economy reduced the need for the oppressive system of social controls that had earlier been required to maintain it… The increased pace of urbanization after 1930… served as a second stimulus to organizational development within the southern black community... The expansion of *occupational opportunities* in southern cities thus contributed to a marked decline in the financial vulnerability of the black population both by pulling people out of southern agriculture and by concentrating them in numbers sufficient to support a growing occupation structure independent of white control. (P. 96, 97)

Some of the conceptual problems with McAdam's definition of political opportunity structures are apparent here. First, by economic and occupational opportunity, McAdam (1982) clearly meant simply that jobs were available in urban areas and these areas appeared to offer greater possibilities for earning higher wages. However, he addressed these terms as types of opportunities, yet ultimately reduced them to political opportunity. Secondly, he explained that demographic changes contributed to urbanization and the collapse of the cotton economy. Therefore, he reduced increased economic opportunities, occupational opportunities, demographic changes, the collapse of the cotton economy, and urbanization as factors of political opportunity. Political opportunity, then, was simply a vaguely conceptualized and operationalized concept, which could include any type of social process or structural element that could logically and retrospectively be deemed beneficial to the insurgency. Therefore, while the political process theory was an innovative perspective on social movements, the concept of political opportunity was too broad.

Regardless, through his analysis of tactical innovations, McAdam (1983) did provide a useful description of the dynamic and recursive nature of the political process and the expansion and contraction of political opportunities. Political opportunity structures are necessary for a movement to arise (i.e., "Tactical innovations only become potent in the context of a political system vulnerable to insurgency" [McAdam 1983:737]); once a movement has mobilized, it employs strategies and tactics to induce federal response. Subsequently, the state responds with equally innovative tactics and strategies in an attempt to extinguish the movement. This recursive process continues until the movement achieves its goals (or a goal), it dies out, or is extinguished by its opponents. Throughout the political process, and with each tactical response, political opportunity structures expand and contract (McAdam 1983).

In regards to the political opportunity structure producing political instability, McAdam and Moore (1989) wrote,

> Generalized political instability destroys any semblance of political status quo, thus encouraging collective action by *all* groups sufficiently organized to contest the structuring of a new political order. Such situations of generalized political instability can be contrasted to instances in which broad social processes favorably effect the opportunities for insurgent action of particular challengers. In such cases, long-term socioeconomic changes serve simply to elevate the group in question to a position of increased political strength without necessarily undermining the structural basis of the entire political establishment (P. 257)

When considering Third World social movements, the notion that shifting political opportunities can undermine the political structure seems especially problematic. In the previous section on the state, I explained that McAdam considered the state structure fundamentally stable, which could also explain why they suggested here that "generalized political instability destroys any semblance of political status quo" (McAdam and Moore 1989:257). That is, in many Third World countries, crises are managed much differently then in the United States. Moreover, the extreme political and economic conditions in many Third World countries leave them in a

constant state of instability. The structural bases of the political systems in Third World countries are constantly threatened, and, depending on the countries, the political structures shift from military regimes to so-called democracies to authoritarian regimes. For example, with the exception of the periods from 1992 to 1996 and 2001 to now, Thailand was in a chronic state of economic and political instability. In spite of multiple military coups and economic crises, military regimes and semi-democratic regimes, excluded groups only gained significant access to political space during a brief time between 1975 and 1976. In fact, the military was even more repressive during times of extreme political and economic crises. Therefore, in spite of political and economic instability, excluded groups rarely see an expansion in political opportunities, unless of course a full-blown revolution occurs, in which case political opportunity structures might expand significantly for the excluded groups. Regardless, McAdam and Moore's interpretation of instability works in a fundamental stable political system such as the U.S.; however, such an assessment of political opportunities becomes problematic when examining Third World social movements.

4.2.2. Refinement Stage

All of McAdam's work during the 1980s appears to be aimed at legitimating the political process theory. However, by the 1990s, McAdam became highly critical of the political process theory. To begin, in his 1994 article, McAdam attempted to refine his conceptualization of political opportunity by distinguishing cultural opportunity from political opportunity. By cultural opportunity, he meant the "specific events or processes that are likely to stimulate collective framing efforts" (McAdam 1994:39). Although cultural opportunity is analytically distinguishable from political opportunity, McAdam (1994) argued that one must understand the

cultural opportunity in order to understand political opportunity: "The causal importance of expanding political opportunities, then, is inseparable from the collective definitional processes by which the meaning of these shifts is assigned and disseminated" (P. 39). Therefore, cultural opportunity was the subjective and interpretive factors that contribute to participants' recognition of the objective political opportunity structures.

In reference to his conceptualization of political opportunity in the same 1994 article, McAdam (1994) stated, "[M]ovements are less the product of meso level mobilization efforts than they are the beneficiaries of the increasing political vulnerability or receptivity of their opponents or of the political and economic system as a whole…" (McAdam 1994:39). Here, he restated the claim from his initial political process theory (i.e., McAdam 1982) that political opportunity structures are objective structural features that exist regardless if the movement participants recognize them as opportunity. More importantly, he (1994) added the ideas of vulnerability or receptivity of the economic system and other opponents. Political opportunity, in these terms, consisted of more than simply expansion or contraction of space within the political structure, narrowly conceived; it also included economic factors and other structural factors related to the opponents that contributed to the power of the movement relative to, presumably, both state and non-state opponents. Therefore, although his definition of political opportunity became more specific than his previous definitions, he reintroduced notions of economic and social opportunity in his definition.

McAdam (1994) identified four types of cultural opportunity. The types are conceptually underdeveloped and they overlap, but they certainly could be useful for examining Third World social movements. The first type of cultural opportunity "involves any event or set of events that dramatize a glaring contradiction between a highly resonant cultural value and conventional

social practices" (McAdam 1994:39). This type of cultural opportunity is especially relevant to Third World social movements. In my earlier analysis of the state, I pointed out that McAdam assumed that the citizenry recognized the legitimacy of the state (see page 45) and that freedom, equality, and democracy were culturally resonant values within the society (see page 43). Examining this type of cultural opportunity requires that the researcher understand the history and culture of the given society before even considering examining a social movement within the society. Secondly, it requires the researcher to evaluate the strategies and tactics of a social movement based on the broader cultural values of the given society. Thirdly, if the researcher understands the cultural values of the given society, then she or he would be better equipped to access why certain events do not produce significant collective action while other events do. Finally, intrinsic to understanding the cultural values and conventional practices of a society is understanding the citizenry's perception of the state. Therefore, although McAdam (1994) provided only two brief paragraphs on this type of cultural opportunity, I found it especially relevant for examining Third World social movements.

The lack of explanation and attention to the first type of cultural opportunity might explain why he identified the second dimension of cultural opportunity as a distinct from the other dimensions. The second type of cultural opportunity is "those dramatic, highly publicized and generally unexpected events… that increase public awareness of and opposition to previously accepted societal conditions" (McAdam 1994:40). McAdam (1994) cited major court decisions, official violence, and human-made disasters as type of suddenly imposed grievances. Such dramatic events could produce immediate mass protest, but they are undoubtedly glaring contradictions between the cultural values and conventional social practices, which are the primary features of the first type of cultural opportunity.

The third type of cultural opportunity is "those events or processes that highlight the vulnerability of one's political opponents" (McAdam 1994:41). This type of cultural opportunity is distinct from the previous two in that he emphases the collective perception of the state structure. For example, McAdam (1994) explained, "The ineffectual 1991 coup attempt by Soviet hardliners made it clear just how weak and out of touch the once formidable Communist party bosses had become, thus emboldening citizens from across the USSR to step up demands for political independence and reform" (P. 41). However, this type of cultural opportunity has a more serious conceptual problem. It is unclear how this cultural opportunity is distinct from political opportunity. The only possible distinction could be that, for example, the coup attempt produced structural political opportunity while the cultural opportunity was the recognition of the weakness of the state as a result of seeing the coup attempt.

The fourth type of cultural opportunity was the availability of… 'master protest frames' legitimating collective actions" (McAdam 1994:41). Master frames imply a cognitive, interpretive, and strategic process within the movement and the movement participants. While important to understanding the entire socio-cultural landscape of a social movement, it is difficult to connect master frames to cultural opportunity, political opportunity, and the political system; therefore, I refrain from exploring this aspect further.

In his 1996 chapter, McAdam acknowledged the conceptual vagueness of his previous definitions of political opportunity. One of his stated goals for this chapter was to conceptually distinguish political opportunity from other types of opportunities (McAdam 1996). He was responding to Gamson and Meyer's (1996) statement that, "The concept of political opportunity structure is in trouble, in danger of becoming a sponge that soaks up virtually every aspect of the social movement environment- political institutions and culture, crises of various sorts, political

alliances, and policy shifts… Used to explain so much, it may ultimately explain nothing at all (P. 275). In agreement with Gamson and Meyer (1996), McAdam stated, "To the extent that the concept is defined or used in very different ways, it threatens to be of little use to anyone" (McAdam 1994:25). Unfortunately, in distinguishing political opportunity from other types of opportunity, McAdam (1994) only identified what was not political opportunity (e.g., he restated his [1994] conclusions about cultural opportunity and explained that resources and framing processes are analytically distinct from opportunity); he never actually attempted to clarify the conceptual definition of political opportunity, which was his initial purported aim. The only conceptual definition he provided throughout the chapter was in the opening paragraph, in which he quoted Eisinger (1973): political opportunity structure is "the degree to which groups are likely to be able to gain access to power and to manipulate the political system (1973:25)" (McAdam 1996:23).

Operationally, however, McAdam (1996:26) attempted to "bring more analytic clarity to the concept [of political opportunity structures]." His goal was to define political opportunity narrowly to establish the analytic distinctiveness of the concept. Recall, first, that McAdam (1994, McAdam 1996) identified the cultural elements of social movements as distinct and separate from political opportunity structures. Secondly, here, he (1996) identified political opportunities as factors directly related to state apparatuses, which seemingly removed the social and economic factors that he had previously identified as political opportunity (McAdam 1982, 1983, 1994; McAdam and Moore 1989). In fact, he (1996:26) distinguished "the formal institutional or legal structure of a given political system from the more informal structure of power relations that characterize the system at a given point in time." Thirdly, based on an analysis of three research projects on political opportunities in the U.S. and Western Europe

(Kriesi et al. 1992; Rucht 1996; Tarrow 1994) and one research project on political opportunities in Central America (Brockett 1991), McAdam (1996:27) concluded that four "highly consensual" dimensions of political opportunity exist:

1. The relative openness and closedness of the institutionalized political system
2. The stability or instability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity
3. The presence or absence of elite alliances
4. The states capacity and propensity for repression

The first three dimensions reflect those common features of political opportunity in the U.S. and Western Europe. The fourth dimension was "the only nonconsensual dimension" that McAdam incorporated into his model (McAdam 1996:28). McAdam (1996) explained,

> Other than Brockett, none of the other authors included [state repression] in their schema. I find this omission puzzling. There is considerable empirical evidence attesting to the significance of this factor in shaping the level and nature of movement activity… To view systems of repression as merely expressive of other features of a polity or as mere tools of specific political interests is to blind us to the unpredictable nature of repression and the complex social processes that structure its operations. Anyone who doubts this point would do well to reflect for a moment on the fate of the 1989 Chinese student movement. (P. 28)

I do not find anything puzzling about this omission; in fact, it makes sense given the geographic foci of the four studies. That is, among the four articles McAdam examined, Brockett's article was the only analysis of Third World social movements (i.e., comparative analysis of social movements in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua). Kriesi et al. (1992) comparatively examined social movements in France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland; Tarrow (1994) focused on social movements occurring throughout Western Europe; and Rucht (1996) analyzed social movements in France, Germany, and the United States. The glaring differences between Brockett's (1991) article and the other three articles are the fundamentally different political structures, economic conditions, and socio-cultural environments. The violent regimes in El Salvador and Guatemala during the 1970s and 1980s,

for example, are practically incomparable to the stable democracies in the U.S. and Western Europe. The state structures are fundamentally different; therefore, the dimensions of political opportunity would also be fundamentally different. Ironically, after McAdam (1996) attempted to narrowly operationalize political opportunity by identifying four primary dimensions of political opportunity, he stated, "the dimensions of political opportunity vary depending on the question one is seeking to answer" (McAdam 1996:29). It appears that he digressed from his initial purpose and suggested narrowly operationalizing political opportunity is impossible.

McAdam (1996) wrote little about the first dimension – the relative openness of the institutionalized political system – except that it was evident in all four articles he reviewed. Considering the array of political structures in the Third World, ranging from totalitarian regimes to semi-democracies, it is important to develop this dimension; simply examining the relative openness or closedness of the institutional political system overlooks numerous elements of the Third World political structure. At a minimum, to examine the openness or closedess of the institutional political system, the researcher must (1) identify the institutional parameters of the state, (2) examine the state's ability and capacity to respond to the demands of the movement, and (3) analyze the structure of the political processes within the institutional political system. First, I agree that access to the institutional political system is important; however, the boundaries of institutional politics are hazy, especially in the Third World. Even those groups who have regular access to the institutional political system still face significant barriers. Secondly, McAdam (1982:25) defined a social movement as "those organized efforts, on the part of excluded groups, to promote or resist changes in the structure of society that involve recourse to noninstitutional forms of political participation." However, the distinction between institutional forms of political participation and noninstitutional forms of political participation is

also unclear, especially in the Third World. Sit-ins, work stoppages, and sabotage are clearly noninstitutional forms of political participation and voting is clearly an institutional form of political participation. Political parties with revolutionary goals that employ street demonstrations to rally public support do not seem to fit neatly under institutional or noninstitutional political participation. The Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) in Guatemala illustrates both conceptual problems inherent in this dimension of political opportunity. The URNG arose in the early 1980s as a guerrilla movement and established itself as a political party in 1996; however, some groups within the URNG still employ tactics disruptive to the political and economic system (McCleary 1999). Therefore, the institutional/ noninstitutional dichotomy is problematic, thus complicating the analytic utility of measuring the relative openness or closedness of the institutionalized political system.

It is necessary to note also that McAdam (1996) omitted Rucht's notion of policy implementation capacity-- "the power of authorities to implement adopted policies, regardless of internal or external resistance" (Rucht 1996:190) -- as a dimension of political opportunity. McAdam (1996) wrote, "This factor bears a strong family resemblance to Kitschelt's (1986) stress on the critical importance of 'the capacity of the political system to effectively meet demands.' I omitted this dimension for the same reason that Brockett did in his conceptualization of political opportunity" (P. 29). Citing Brockett (1991:254), McAdam (1996) suggested that this factor, "is often one of the decisive determinants of outcomes…However, the determinants of outcomes of political conflict often differ from those of collective action; therefore the position taken here is that it is more useful not to conflate and confuse the two discussions'"(P. 29). What is important and directly relevant to the mobilization and development of Third World social movements as well as the dynamic relationship between the state and the social movement is the

state's ability to effectively meet the demands of a movement if the state is so inclined. Omitting this as a dimension of political opportunity neglects a key aspect of the relationship between the state and social movements in the Third World.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1. Summary and Conclusion

My detailed reading and analysis of the writings of McAdam's political process theory have suggested the following weaknesses:

1. McAdam's conceptual understanding of political opportunity and the state reflected a Eurocentric reading and understanding. His conceptualization of the state assumes Western-style democratic states, which cannot be generalized to the Third World. By examining social movements only in the U.S. and Western Europe he has limited his conceptual understanding of political opportunity structures. That is, the state structure in all of his analyses had one underlying similarity, a democratic political structure. As a result, he overlooked some factors that tend to differ greatly between the U.S. and Western Europe, on the one hand, and the Third World on the other: (a) the cultural value system surrounding notions of democracy, freedom, and equality, (b) the citizenry's perception of the legitimacy of the state, and (c) the state's ability and capacity to respond to the demands of the movement.

2. The concept of political opportunity structures remains conceptually and operationally vague. Political opportunity was a vaguely conceptualized and operationalized concept that could include various types of social processes, events, or structural features that the researcher deems beneficial or detrimental to the insurgency. Even on occasions where he purported to clarify the conceptual definition of political opportunity (e.g., McAdam 1996), he was only able to identify what was not political opportunity. He did not provide a refined conceptual definition of political opportunity. The fact that McAdam never refined the definition of political opportunity structures more specifically than "any event or broad social process that serves to

undermine the calculations and assumptions on which the political establishment is structured" is especially disconcerting (McAdam 1982:41). In the end, I still find Gamson and Meyer's (1996) observation compelling, and unresolved:

> The concept of political opportunity structure is in trouble, in danger of becoming a sponge that soaks up virtually every aspect of the social movement environment- political institutions and culture, crises of various sorts, political alliances, and policy shifts… It threatens to become an all-encompassing fudge factory for all the conditions and circumstances that form the context of collective action. Used to explain so much, it may ultimately explain nothing at all. (P.275)

3. The political process theory overemphasizes the analytic and practical importance of the electoral system. In nondemocratic or less democratic countries, electoral politics are not a meaningful avenue through which movements can achieve their goals. Other factors that contribute to the expansion or contraction of political opportunities become more important. For example, the state's capacity to respond to the demands of the movement, the inherent stability of the state structure, the strength of the military, and the state's willingness to use repressive tactics seem to be overarching factors that could directly contribute to the rise, development, and decline of a social movement, and could shape the tactics the movement employs.

4. McAdam did not consider the context of an inherently unstable political structure. Although McAdam did consider stability within the polity as an important factor in the expansion of political opportunities, he considered instability narrowly only as much as it affected the current configuration of elites within the polity. In the Third World, many states are in a chronic state of fundamental instability, which can produce a completely different set of relations between the state and social movements.

5. The implicit notion that a functional democratic process *within the institutional parameters of the state* exists and is accessible only for a small group of elites cannot be universalized to the Third World. The problem here is two-fold. First, what is the conceptual

distinction between institutional political system and noninstitutitonal forms of political participation? This distinction was not explicit in McAdam's work. Implicitly the fundamental distinction between institutional and noninstitutional rested in the electoral process (i.e., the right to vote) and legal system. Both the existence of an electoral process and access to a legal system are fundamental characteristics of the state in Western-style democracies; however, he oversimplifies the complexities of the political process with this institutional/noninstitutional dichotomy. Second, even if the electoral process and the legal system were the definitive parameters of the state apparatus, a more questionable assumption would remain: a democratic process exists somewhere within the institutional framework of the state. McAdam's analyses proceed on the assumption that some degree of accessibility exists within the state apparatus; a movement's attainment of its goals is primarily a matter of the group acquiring access to that democratic process. A democratic process simply cannot be assumed in the Third World.

5.2. Proposal for Future Research

The analysis herein is a modest attempt to refine the political process theory by illuminating some of the theoretical discrepancies in its application to Third World social movements. My goal is to use this project as the basis for a more realistic perspective though which to empirically examine Third World social movements. I find McAdam's political process theory to be the most promising starting point for the development of such a research program, but the theory's western biases must be corrected. As Harding (1998) declares,

> When eurocentrism is understood as prejudice, the least-visibly eurocentric groups can, intentionally or not, most effectively advance eurocentric institutional, societal, and civilizational practices. To say this is not to attribute such eurocentric motivations inevitably to those who design and maintain eurocentric institutions, for while some have such covert intentions, others may not. Some may actively abhor eurocentrism and yet end up with beliefs and

> behaviors that advance it. Thus, good intentions and tolerant behaviors are not enough to guarantee that one is in fact supporting anti-eurocentric beliefs and practices. It is therefore useful for those who bear the costs of eurocentrism… to understand it as fundamentally a set of institutional, societal, and civilizational arrangements for distributing scarce economic, social, and political resources. (P. 12,13)

To develop a workable perspective on Third World social movements, we must become far more alert to our eurocentric assumptions than Western social movement theorists have been up to now.

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