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Chapter Nine

Political Opportunity and Capitalist Crisis

Richard Hogan

Charles Tilly (1978: 56) offers a simple model of collective action that appears to be causal or at least nonrecursive and appears to be Marxist or at least materialist. At various points, however, Tilly (1978) muddies the water. First, his Marxist model of collective action (1978: 43) fails to specify the relationship between class consciousness and collective action. Second, his discussion of interests includes both objective (predicted by class relations) and subjective (expressed) interests without much concern for the relationship between the two (1978: 61). Finally, after specifying how interest and organization predict mobilization, opportunity threat, and power, which, in turn, predict collective action, Tilly (1978: 57) concedes that many if not most of these effects are "reciprocal over the longer run."

Later, Tilly (1986a: 396) identifies statemaking and capital accumulation as interactive historical processes that directly affect organization, opportunity, and interests and are, apparently, both cause and effect of collective action. Specifically, collective action affects but also is affected by statemaking and capital accumulation (Tilly 1978: 386–98). At this point there is little dialectical materialism left in Tilly's model. The Marxist roots

have been severed. What remains is conflict theory (Dahrendorf 1959; Mills 1956), which provides a broad foundation for a new generation of resource mobilization theories (McCarthy and Zald 1987; see McAdam 1982: 20–35). This interactive model of collective action and social movements is reproduced and elaborated in Doug McAdam's (1982: 51–52) political process model and in Sidney Tarrow's (1994: chap. 9) cycles of protest.

Tilly (1999a: 253–70) argues that we now must move beyond these interactive models. We must “formulate clear theories of the causal processes by which social movements produce their effects” (Tilly 1999a: 270). Toward that end I recommend a return to Marx. I begin here by specifying, first, at the organizational level, the relations between consciousness and collective action and then, at the institutional level, the relations between economic and political processes. Then a brief analysis of strikes in the United States from the New Deal to the New Federalism (1933–1989) illustrates how this dialectical model might inform our thinking about economics, politics, and class struggle as we look back on the twentieth century. Finally, Tilly's (2003a) recent turn toward recurrent processes that might explain a wide variety of more or less successful political challenges is applied in a brief comparison of the March on Washington movements of 1941 and 1963. The benefits of incorporating the structural analysis proposed here is then illustrated in contrasting these two marches and in a speculative analysis of challenges to the U.S. governing coalitions of the recent past and future.

From Marx to Mobilization

Tilly (1978: chap. 2) seems to favor Marx in his discussion of the four horsemen of collection action theories. Durkheim and Weber are rejected because they distinguish routine from nonroutine collective action. Mill is rejected because he reduces collective action to individual interests and actions. Thus we are left with Marx as the base for building a model, using mostly bits and pieces of Weber and Mill to develop an organizational theory of interests and actors. The problem is not in the added elements, however. The base model, the Marxian model of collective action, is interactive rather than dialectical. Specifically, the organization of production predicts both solidarity and conflicting interests, which interact (and are thereby analytically inseparable) as each predicts collective action.

The problem with Tilly's (1978) Marxist model is that “solidarity” (a Durkheimian concept) and “conflicting interests” (a Weberian concept) are not dialectically linked to either the economic cause (the organization of production) or the political effect (collective action). Figure 9.1 offers an alternative model in which the organization of production and the organization of reproduction represent the alienated components of work and

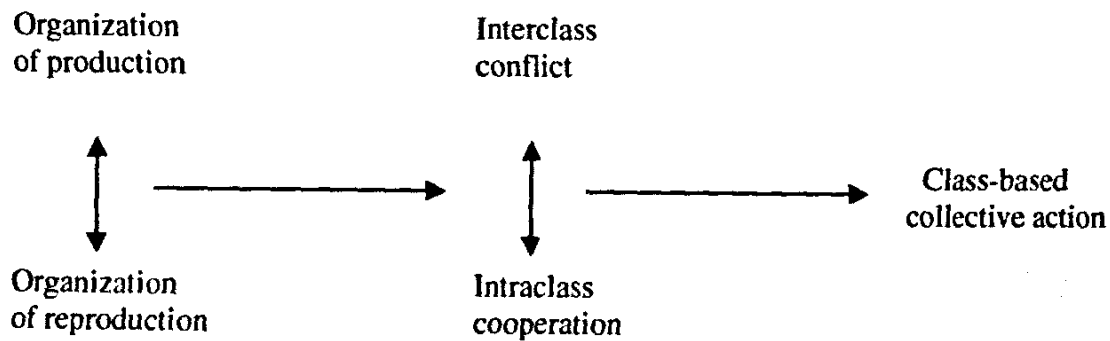


Fig. 9.1. Marxist model of collective action

life that engender both interclass conflict and intraclass cooperation, which inspire class-based collective action.

For estimating Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression models it is not clear that this is a major improvement over Tilly's (1978) model. Theoretically, however, it is a better representation of the Marxist dialectic because it is holistic and oppositional. The alienation of life and work and the corresponding relations between and within classes are clearly inseparable and antagonistic components of a logical whole. In Marx's writings on the origin of private property and the state it is clear that family and community are important elements in the prehistory of the slave system and the emergence of the state (Marx and Engels 1978: 159–60). Similarly, in explaining why French peasants cannot "represent themselves [but] must be represented," it is not simply because of their mode of production but also because of "their mode of life, their interests and their culture" (Marx 1978: 608).

Tilly (1978) wants to break up the holistic dialectical model in order to introduce an organizational theory, so that "internal organization" can be added to the model. Here Tilly (1978: 43) uses interests, organization, and relations with other classes as intervening variables that specify the process through which the organization of production predicts common consciousness and collective action. There are, however, a number of problems in this model. First, how can relations with other classes be distinguished from shared interests and internal organization? Second, how can interests, organizations, and relationships be separated from family, community, or "mode of life" (as opposed to work)? Isn't the colonial militia (or the parish church) part of this internal organization? Third, and most important, how is the model of consciousness and collective action different from Durkheim's model of "routine action" (see Tilly 1978: 15)? At the risk of rekindling historical and structural Marxist debates, I maintain that this model appears to be functional but is, in fact, simply interactive. Everything affects consciousness and action, and they affect each other reciprocally.

This then provides the base for the disclaimer later (1978: 57) that many of the effects "are reciprocal over the long run." Ignoring that problem for the moment, however, Tilly (1978: 56) is able to specify a nonrecursive model of collective action, in which something like Marxist class interests predict collective action, through their effects on organization, mobilization, opportunity/threat, and repression/facilitation, which then affects power, which together with mobilization and opportunity/threat predicts collective action.

For present purposes we shall focus on opportunity/threat. This is where Tilly (1978) uses Millian models of rational actors who respond to possibilities for gaining or losing new advantages by mobilizing resources or expending them in a political challenge to the government or to some other actor who might be vulnerable to new claims or might be advancing new claims of its own. It is here, in fact, that the problem of history is most apparent. Clearly, as Tilly (1978: 231–35) recognizes, history matters. In fact, statemaking had dramatic effects on interests and organizations and thereby on mobilization and collective action (230). As we leave Tilly in 1978, we are reminded that statemaking and resistance to statemaking (and warmaking) matter. When we rejoin Tilly in 1986, he has elaborated the effects of history to include the "concentration of capital [and the] concentration of political power." As Tilly (1986a: 396) explains: "Statemaking and capitalism did not merely shape organization and opportunity. They also dominated the fluctuating interests of different groups in collective action."

The problem, however, is in determining, first, how statemaking and capitalism affect each other and, second, how each affects and is affected by interests, organization, and opportunity. The simple answer is that everything affects everything, and the effects are reciprocal. Thus, as Tilly (1999a: 270) explains, we need "to formulate clear theories of the causal processes by which social movements produce their effects." To do so, however, we must first decide on an institutional focus and a level of analysis. Gamson's (1990) pioneering work, for example, focuses on national (federal) politics and the organizational level of analysis to ask how and why some organizations were more successful in gaining access to or advantages from federal policymakers. McAdam (1982) expands this analysis to incorporate the historical effects of changing opportunities for political protest. Later, however, McAdam (1992) focuses on individual political and historical-biographical experience. Then, McAdam (1999a) aggregates these experiences to explain cohort effects on life choices. Similarly, Tilly (1978) focuses on economic and political organization as it affects national political institutions. Then, Tilly (1986a) focuses on economic and political institutions as they affect political organization. More recently, Tarrow (1994) attempts to accommodate the reciprocal effects of political organizations and institutions, but the focus is on the organizational level. In fact, most of the resource mobilization and political process research is focused on political organizations. The connections between these political organizations

and their economic and cultural counterparts are usually posed as problematic: the role of churches, shopkeepers, and labor unions in the southern civil rights movements, for example (Morris 1984). Connections to individual- or institutional-level phenomena are much less studied and much less clearly articulated.

Back to Marx

Figure 9.2 offers a set of dialectical models that are distinguished by institutional focus and level of analysis. The economic institutional analysis is, essentially, the Marx of *Capital* (1867). The cultural institutional analysis is the early Marx (1844–1846). At the organizational level we find the middle Marx (1852–1871), struggling with the problem of conservative peasants and precocious proletarians. At the individual level we find critical theory (Habermas 1987, but not Marx). The challenge is to incorporate all of this economic and cultural analysis into the analysis of the national political economy.

If we can imagine all of the economic and cultural components in the upper panel of figure 9.2 represented, in the lower panel, within capitalism (which includes exploitation, culture, and experience), classes (including

Institutional focus	Level of analysis		
	Institutional	Organizational	Individual
Economic	exploiter ↕ exploited	circumstance	interest
Cultural	culture ↕ experience	consciousness	knowledge
National political economy	republicanism ↕ capitalism	parties ↕ classes	partisanship ↕ protest

Fig. 9.2. Marxist dialectical models by institutional focus and levels of analysis

circumstance and consciousness), and protest (representing interest and knowledge), then the problem is reduced to specifying the dialectical relations between republicanism and capitalism, as indicated in the lower panel of figure 9.2. This is, once again, middle Marx. The relationship between republicanism and capitalism is complex in Marx's analysis. At times, it appears to be deterministic: "The bourgeois monarchy of Louis Philippe can only be followed by a bourgeois republic" (Marx 1978: 601). It is not clear, however, in the larger analysis of class struggles in France from 1848 to 1852, that the form of economic organization (proto-industrial capitalism) determined the form of political organization (monarchy, then republic, then empire). What is clear in this case is that the class interests of the bourgeoisie were in conflict with their political interests. To some extent this was because of the conflicts between the "finance aristocracy" and the "party of order," the political representatives of finance and industrial capital. This intraclass conflict (or struggle between fractions of the capitalist class) appears (to Marx) to be attributable to the politically precocious yet economically underdeveloped French society. This peculiarly French condition (in contrast to the economically developed and politically backward British) is echoed in Tilly's characterization in *The Contentious French* (1986).

Marx clearly appreciates the French political culture and the fact that the French are, in the mid-nineteenth century, recapitulating the revolutionary struggles that commenced, prematurely, in 1789. Within this context, Marx uses class analysis at the organizational level to explain how, in 1848, the "bourgeois monarchy [was] followed by a bourgeois republic," because the industrial bourgeoisie was able to mobilize petit bourgeois and proletarian allies in mimicking the revolutionary grandeur of the French Revolution (of 1789) in order to fight its way into a governing coalition with the finance aristocracy, at the expense of the landed (titled) aristocrats and the church. More important for the future of the bourgeois republic, the fear of the petit bourgeois National Guard (a political organization) and the prospects of a revolutionary proletariat (leaderless and disorganized by order of the National Assembly, another political organization; see Marx 1978: 600-601) paralyzed the bourgeois republic and made it impossible for the bourgeoisie to rule in its own name. Then the lumpen-proletarian street gangs and the peasant electors pushed Napoleon III into prominence.

Pulling back from the details of this analysis to the theory of political economy, the following generalizations might be offered. First, the relationship between consciousness (or expressed interests) and collective action is essentially an organizational problem rooted in the ability of classes and parties to articulate and defend their interest, as opposed to being represented by someone else who claims to speak in their name (Kimmeldorf 1999: 14-19; Dubofsky 1988: chap. 7; Piven and Cloward 1979: chap. 1). Second, the organizational analysis should be rooted in an institutional analysis that views economic and political crisis as endemic and epidemic

(see O'Connor 1984), providing opportunities for organized classes and parties to mobilize or to make claims. Third, at both the institutional and the organizational level, the analysis should recognize that economics and politics are dialectically linked in conflict and contradiction that drives change. Economic crises engender political crises, and fractions of classes form unstable alliances in ill-fated governing coalitions.

Economic and Political Cycles

Tarrow (1994: 82–85) explains the contradictory effects of economic depression on political protest by distinguishing between economic and political opportunities. Clearly, strikes and other forms of collective protest follow the boom-and-bust cycles of capital accumulation. Economic boom creates resources for labor and capital that inspire labor to increase its demands. During the bust cycle labor has fewer resources to sustain its claims and capital has fewer resources to grant new advantages, so strikes tend to fall and rise in response to the boom and bust of the national economy. At the same time, however, there are strike waves that seem to defy the logic of economic cycles. Tarrow (1994) argues that the U.S. and French strikes in the 1930s were a response to political rather than economic opportunities. "It was the political opportunities opened by the French Popular Front and the American New Deal that caused the surge of labor insurgency in a poor labor market, and not the depth of the workers' grievances or the extent of their resources" (Tarrow 1994: 84).

My position is that Tarrow is half right, because cycles of political opportunity are, ultimately, rooted in economic cycles of boom and bust. The long nineteenth century (1776–1929) in the United States was, most generally, a long cycle of *laissez-faire* economic development, in which government acted, increasingly, as a facilitator, particularly in the development of transportation (Hogan 1985: 35–51; Hogan 1990). Generally, economic growth in the long nineteenth century followed short cycles (approximately twenty years) of boom and bust through the long cycle, with depressions becoming increasingly severe at the end of the cycle, ultimately producing the Great Depression when the stock market crashed in 1929 (Hogan 2001: 70–73).

Boom-and-bust cycles create cycles of political opportunity. The boom facilitates the mobilization of challengers (who have slack resources in times of economic growth) and provides authorities with the resources to grant concessions (or to preempt challengers by offering them new advantages). The economic depression (bust) creates vulnerable authorities, because they lack the resources to act but face increasing demands for action from challengers who mobilized during the boom years. Consequently, challengers who are able to mount successful challenges during the boom years tend to

be co-opted (if possible) during the bust years. If that is successful, the new coalition works toward some creative solution to the crisis.

At the end of the long nineteenth century, big labor and big capital were co-opted into the New Deal (corporate liberal) governing coalition in an agreement to stop squabbling over the division of wealth and to concentrate on increasing the gross domestic product (GDP) (Cohen 1990; Dubofsky 1994). Of course, the postwar boom facilitated the mobilization of new challengers—blacks, women, students, and others (poor people, for example) who were not part of the new governing coalition (Honey 1993; Horowitz 1997). At least initially, it appears that these interests were preempted in equal rights, Great Society, and War on Poverty programs (even the students were granted the vote in 1970).

The economic crisis of the early 1970s included stagflation (inflation and unemployment, decreased industrial production, and falling real wages) and, of course, the energy crisis. The political problems generated by these economic crises were exacerbated by the antiwar movement, which was winding down. At the same time, however, the environmental movement was gearing up. These economic and political challenges combined to produce serious economic and political crises for the Nixon administration. Failure to control stagflation with wage and price freezes and difficulties in ending the war in Southeast Asia and at home exacerbated the political crisis. Watergate simply compounded these problems and led, ultimately, to attempts to reinvent government and stimulate economic growth through deregulation—in other words, Reaganomics.

In sum, the boom years of the 1950s and 1960s facilitated political challenges that were, in varying degrees, preempted, particularly while the economy was still booming, in the late 1960s. In the bust cycle of the early 1970s, however, preemption became increasingly difficult and co-optation failed. Thus, Nixon, in particular, and government, in general, failed to co-opt challengers and establish a new governing coalition (Hogan 1997; Hogan 2003).

There was, however, a qualitative change in the nature of the U.S. political economy between the New Deal and the New Federalism. The failure of Republican peace and prosperity in the 1920s provided the opportunity for a new governing coalition that included big labor (the American Federation of Labor [AFL]) and big capital in partnership with big government. Government and industry cooperated in revitalizing and fully developing the modern industrial system, together with industrial unionism but only within the craft tradition and without militants or radicals. The failure of Republican peace and prosperity in the 1970s provided the opportunity for the postmodern or postindustrial speculative frenzy of 1972–1989, characterized by union busting and new ways of thinking about labor and capital relations. Thus the story of industry and industrial unionism from the New Deal to the New Federalism illustrates how broadly similar patterns of economic and political processes can yield qualitatively differ-

ent patterns of collective action. These are, however, comprehensible in theory and consistent with a dialectical and materialist history that strives for conceptual clarity while recognizing that history is messy and that the facts (particularly as represented in primary sources/government documents) do not speak for themselves.

From New Deal to New Federalism

The New Deal provided political opportunities, particularly for labor. Tarrow characterizes political opportunity by “increasing access, influential allies, unstable alliances, and divided elites” (1994: 86–88). Clearly, the election of liberal Democrat Franklin Delano Roosevelt provided organized labor with increased access to an influential ally, which might allow labor to exploit the unstable alliance of union-busting southern Democrats (Honey 1993: chap. 2) and friendlier northerners (Horowitz 1997: chap. 3) and to take advantage of divisions within and between economic and political elites. In other words, the election of 1932, even more than the depression, facilitated mobilization and collective action, as indicated by the wave of strike activity (Dubofsky 1994: 107–11).

Although the waves of political protest, including strikes, were not simply a response to the economic crisis of the 1930s, it is important to recognize that October 29, 1929, was a textbook example of capitalist crisis, straight out of chapter 25, volume 1, *Capital* (Marx 1967). Figure 9.3 presents annual

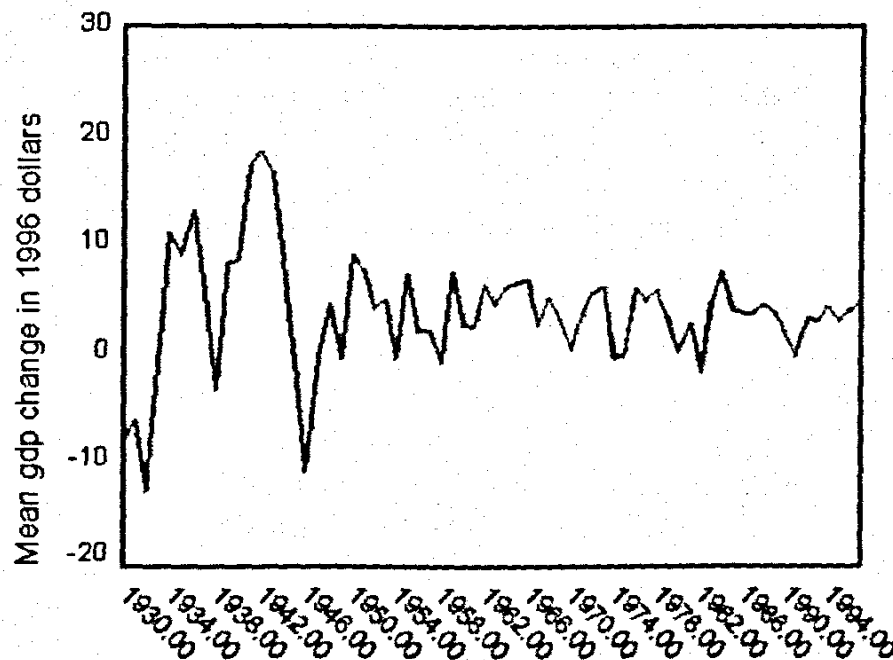


Fig. 9.3. Average change in gross domestic product by year, 1930–1996

Source: Base statistics from Bureau of Economic Analysis, “Current and ‘Real’ Gross Domestic Product,” 08/29/02, <http://www.bea.doc.gov>.

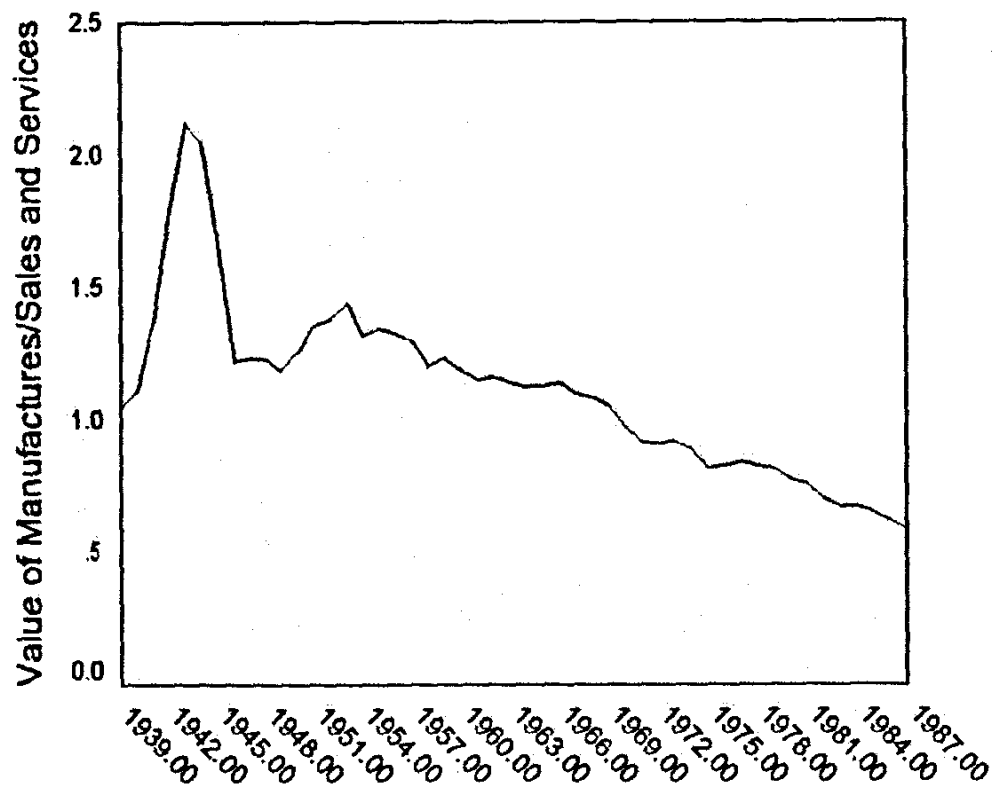


Fig. 9.4. Value of manufacturing/sales and service wages, 1939–1987

Source: Base statistics from Bureau of Economic Analysis, "National Income and Product Accounts Tables, Table 6.3A. Wage and Salary Accruals by Industry," 07/28/00, <http://www.bea.doc.gov>.

change in GDP (percent change in constant 1996 dollars) from 1930 to 1996. The magnitude of the boom-and-bust cycles between 1930 and 1950 indicates the enormity of the economic crisis. At the same time, however, the pattern of boom and bust is characteristic. It is only the scale of the boom and bust that makes this period exceptional. Otherwise, the twin peaks of the New Deal recovery, 1930–1946, are not so different from the speculative frenzy of 1972–1989.

What distinguished the New Deal recovery was the nature of the economic recovery and the nature of the governing coalition that cooperated in pursuit of prosperity. As indicated in figure 9.4, the New Deal recovery was rooted in the cooperation of AFL craft unions in reestablishing manufacturing before, during, and to a lesser extent after the U.S. involvement in World War II (Dubofsky 1994: chaps. 5–7; Honey 1993: chaps. 3–7; Keeran 1986: chap. 6). By 1972, the United States had turned to "more flexible modes of capital accumulation" (Harvey 1990) that were not limited to the production of goods and services. In fact, the growth sector of this postmodern economy was FIRE (finance, insurance, and real estate), which facilitated

the extended boom before the bankers stole the money and the savings and loan industry collapsed (Calavita and Pontell 1992).

Not just productivity but also the nature of the industrial enterprise and the accompanying governing coalition are of critical importance in evaluating political opportunity as it affects collective action and organization. The first panel of figure 9.5 presents the number of work stoppages (strikes and lockouts) per year from 1927 to 1980 (the last year for which the Department of Labor provides these statistics). There is a sharp rise in work stoppages in the 1930s and in the 1960s, which might correspond with the New Deal and Great Society governing coalitions.

The second panel of figure 9.5 presents the number of large work stoppages (involving one thousand or more workers). Here the dramatic decline after 1953 and particularly after 1974 is much more striking. The postmodern economy of the Reagan years provided economic and political opportunities for the finance aristocracy, who profited from plundering the public coffers, assured that reparations would be in the form of welfare for the wealthy once the Bush regime was established (with the election of George I in 1988). Federal union busting was not the cause but the consequence of a steady decline in the resources and organization of the unions that had long since been purged of militant and radical leadership.

Figure 9.6 presents the percent of the civilian labor force who are union members, 1930–2001. Clearly, the New Deal governing coalition produced the greatest increase in union membership, as unions became legally recognized bargaining units, purged of more militant and radical/political elements and granted the privileges of polity membership. Since about 1955 (the last relative increase in manufacturing wages) union membership has been in steady decline. The last decrease in the rate of decline was in 1974. The apparent increase in 1980 is due to change in the way that the Labor Department measures union membership.

The defeat of unionism is not, however, marked by the disillusionment that followed in the wake of the Watergate scandal or by the New South or New Democrats of the postmodern era. Neither is it the inevitable result of inexorable economic forces. The New Deal offered membership to craft unions in an effort to defeat industrial unionism while using industrialism to defeat fascism and communism in a single blow. Some challengers, particularly blacks and women who were willing to cooperate with the corporate liberal governing coalition, were able to gain new advantages. In the New Deal era, A. Philip Randolph used the threat of a March on Washington to obtain Executive Order No. 8802, which would promote civil rights as a wartime necessity (Pfeffer 1990: 49). Before he died, Randolph attended the 1963 March on Washington, which was, once again, a tactic for encouraging a reluctant federal government to enforce civil rights (Pfeffer 1990: 279). By then, however, industrial unionism and even industrialism was a forgone opportunity.

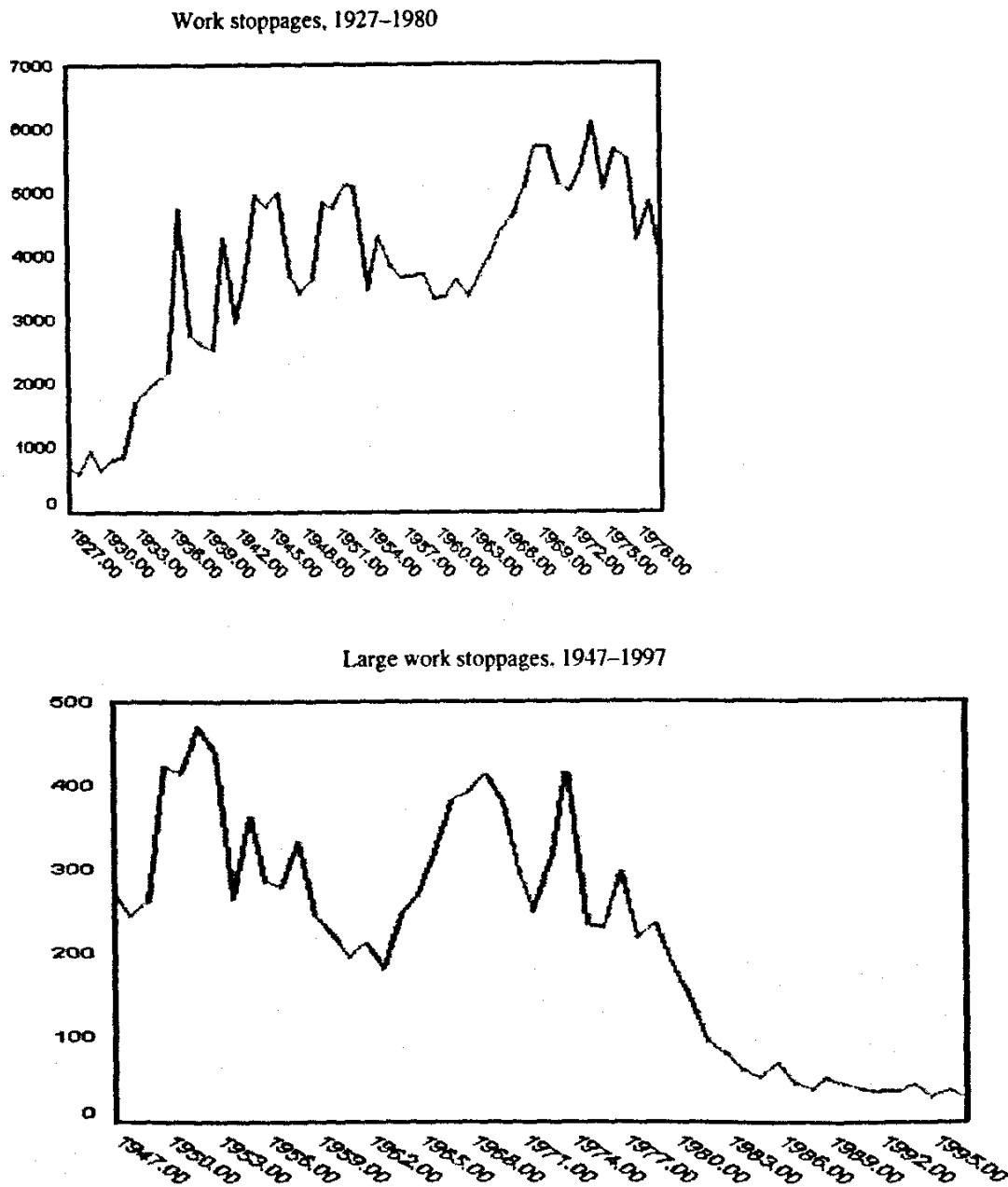


Fig. 9.5. Number of work stoppages, 1927-1978, and large work stoppages, 1947-1995

Source: Base statistics from United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Analysis of Work Stoppages, 1980," March 1982, Bulletin 2120, and "Major Work Stoppages, 1997," USDL 98-57, 2/12/1998.

The Lessons of History

Tilly's (1999a) call to move beyond interactive contingency models has been answered, to some extent, by Tilly's (2003a) move toward mechanisms and processes that recur in a variety of historical settings but still yield comparable effects. Thus brokering and polarization, for example, can be observed in the complex relationship between labor and civil rights movements be-

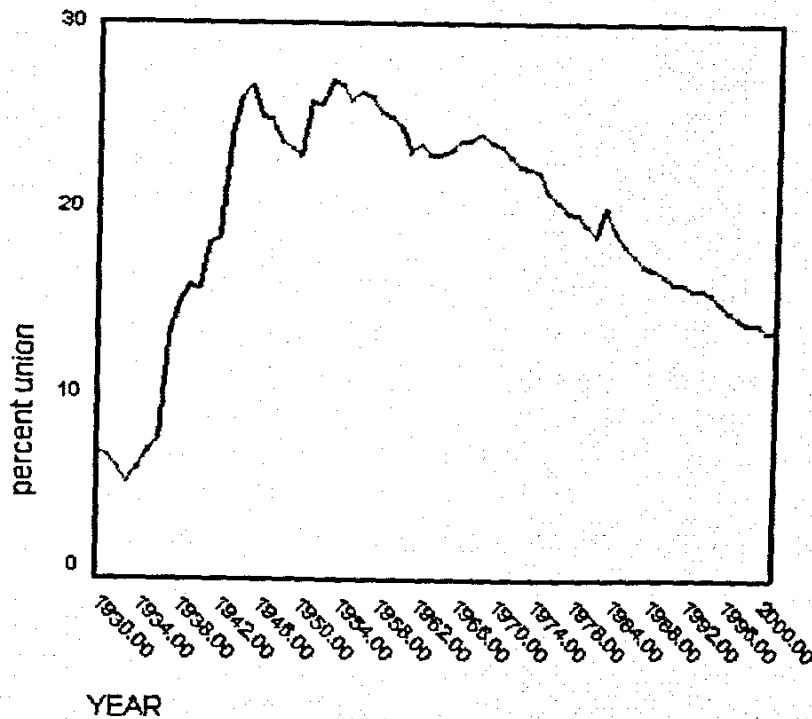


Fig. 9.6. Percent of civilian labor force in union, 1930–2001

Source: Base statistics from United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Directory of National Unions and Employee Associations* (1930–1980) and *Current Population Survey* (1983–2001).

tween 1930 and 1968, as the March on Washington became a potent weapon in negotiating for federal leadership on civil rights. The extent to which Randolph was able to broker a cooperative venture between labor and civil rights organizations was critical in 1941. The fact that he was allied with the AFL and with the federal government in his opposition to communism enabled Randolph to exploit the polarization of the labor movement and to join the governing coalition of big labor, big government, and big capital, albeit as a junior partner.

Once again, in 1963, when the March on Washington finally came to pass, it was Randolph's brokering efforts that allowed the major civil rights organizations, the National Council of Churches, the American Jewish Congress, the National Catholic Congress of Interracial Justice, and at least some labor unions to cooperate with a reluctant Democratic administration in promoting federal civil rights legislation (Pfeffer 1990: 244–45). Randolph was able to temporarily stem the tide of polarization between the liberal and the increasingly radical challengers. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee finally agreed to tone down the rhetoric of its challenge to the Kennedy administration when Randolph personally appealed for unity. As in the 1940s, the dangers of polarization and the effects of brokering are clear (Pfeffer 1990: chap. 7).

The extent to which parallel processes figure prominently in these two tales of a march on Washington, suggests the promise of Tilly's (2003a) turn from indeterminate structures to recurrent and predictable mechanisms and processes. We might conclude that the political opportunities of the boom years of 1941 and 1963 inspired labor as well as civil rights challengers, which facilitated the brokering efforts. Since the most recent round of challenges, however, opportunities have been limited. Brokerage has been less successful. Polarization has plagued the movement. Also, the march on Washington, as part of the repertoire of the modern social movement, has become routine. In the next wave, new tactics that push the envelope of acceptable political protest should be expected. The next time a comparable opportunity arises and someone successfully brokers a challenge based on the combined forces of labor, religion, and civil rights organizations, we can expect a comparable if distinct effect. Or can we?

Labor, in general, and industrial unions, in particular, were part of the New Deal governing coalition that emerged from the economic and political crises of the 1930s. The 1960s were the last gasp of organized labor as a polity member supporting political challengers. By the end of the antiwar challenge neither the new conservatives nor the new liberals were courting labor. The co-optation of the moderate environmentalists and the accompanying polarization of the environmental movement created new opportunities for brokerage, but the coalition was rooted in environmentalism rather than industrialism and in gender more than race. In the closing years of the first Bush regime, in lumber, mining, and construction industries, labor joined capital in opposition to environmentalists. Then labor and Bush were defeated in a new Democratic coalition that included environmentalists but not labor (Hogan 2003: 4–8, 119–21).

The historic defeat of labor begins with the co-optation of the AFL and the defeat of communism. By 1963 the AFL-CIO was no longer supporting Randolph and his March on Washington. The more progressive industrial unions, particularly the UAW (United Auto Workers) and ILGWU (International Ladies Garment Workers Union), supported Randolph's march (Pfeffer 1990: 260), but the influence of the industrial unions continued to decline as the economy moved increasingly toward speculation and trade. By the election of 1972 the United States had taken the postmodern turn. By the election of 1982 it was clear that the bankers would rule. When the bankers stole the money and the economy collapsed in 1989, the promise of a revitalized Left proved limited and short-lived. The Clinton years and the international coalition of labor, antinuclear, anti-imperialist, environmental, and peace movements, in opposition to the World Trade Organization, suggested a new coalition of political challengers. Then both economic recovery and access to elites were threatened with the election of George W. Bush, who rose from the ashes of his minority-vote mandate to seize the

scepter of imperial authority, once the world changed with the terrorist attack upon the United States on September 11, 2001.

Now as history repeats itself as farce, with George II invading the heart of the Ottoman Empire, it is instructive to locate the mechanism of brokerage and the process of polarization within the institutional context of the speculative economy of post- (rather than proto-) industrial capitalism. It seems that the economic and political significance of industrial unionism has all but disappeared. With it, the promise of an effective challenge to finance capital seems elusive. Furthermore, the new liberal environmentalist coalition seems equally ineffective. We should not expect the industrial bourgeoisie to mobilize labor in its efforts to fight its way into the governing coalition, but interests do matter.

The environmental interest should learn from the defeat of industrial unionism and recognize that, like labor, its demise began with a new Democratic governing coalition that brokered an uneasy peace between developers and environmentalists by exploiting the polarization of environmentalism (along the fault lines of local versus national, liberal versus radical, and white versus black interests; see Bullard 1990; Szasz 1994). Perhaps the key to brokering challenges in the postmodern global economy of George II is not to reinvent the industrial revolution but to revolutionize industry. So long as environmentalists retain their petit bourgeois reification of property rights, they will never adequately replace the industrial proletariat as a revolutionary force. So long as liberals combine their commitment to democracy with an aversion to violence, they will never provide the base for an effective challenge to international finance capitalism. So long as property rights are secure and free enterprise is unchallenged, human rights will continue to suffer.

The good news is that republican capitalism has not resolved its internal contradictions in the course of the postmodern turn. The alienation of life and work continues to yield conflicts and contradictions that continue to shape the circumstance and consciousness of classes, races, and genders. Unstable coalitions in parties and in governing coalitions continue to engender conflicts and contradictions that animate partisanship and protest. The war on terrorism has provided cover for the war on the environment and on human rights, but it is also engendering opposition and is exacerbating the fiscal crisis of the state. Economic crises and scandals continue to plague the finance aristocracy, as their economic interests endanger their political power.

In the short run it is probably true that the bourgeois empire in Iraq can only be followed by a bourgeois republic. This seems clear, even to the Bush regime. It is equally clear that the party of order cannot rule in its own name but will need a crown (or some sort of Third World despot) to hide behind. The fact that the Bush administration refuses to accept an Islamic

state in Iraq but demands a democratic government illustrates the limits of empire. The limits of republican capitalism at home are perhaps less stark but no less apparent. Ultimately, the contradictions of republican capitalism create both economic cycles of boom and bust and political opportunity cycles. Within these constraints, challengers and political entrepreneurs attempt to exploit polarization and broker coalitions of contradictory class and status (including race and gender) interests.