

INSTITUTE FOR THE SOCIAL SCIENCES WORKSHOP

CONTENTIOUS KNOWLEDGE AND THE DIFFUSION OF SOCIAL PROTEST

November 9-10, 2007

423 ILR Conference Center, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

**Panel I: The Role of Networks, Communication, and NGOs in Tactical Diffusion
Friday, Nov. 9; 10 a.m.-12 p.m.**

"Keeping Genetically Engineered Crops Out of Africa"

[Robert Paarlberg](#), Political Science, Wellesley College

In nearly all the countries of Africa - all but in the Republic of South Africa - governments have not yet made it legal for farmers to plant any genetically engineered agricultural crops, known as GMOs. The reasons for this can be traced to several channels of post-colonial European influence over governmental policy in Africa, including international commodity markets, financial and technical assistance policy, European dominance within the special agencies of the United Nations, and advocacy campaigns by European-based NGOs. Through mechanisms such as these Europe has been exporting its rejection of agricultural GMOs to Africa. Rejecting agricultural biotechnology does no harm to Europe, where farmers can be highly productive and consumers well fed without GMOs. It may not be appropriate in Africa, where farmers are not yet highly productive and consumers are not yet well fed.

Robert Paarlberg is the Betty Freyhof Johnson '44 Professor of Political Science at Wellesley College, and an Associate at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University. He is currently, a member of the Board of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the National Research Council, and has recently been a consultant to USAID, IFPRI, and the World Bank, the Department of State, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. He is the author of several books on agricultural trade policy, U.S. foreign economic policy, and environmentally sustainable farming in developing countries. He has just completed a new book titled "Starved for Science: How Biotechnology is Being Kept Out of Africa" that will be published by Harvard University Press in spring of 2008.

"Dialogue Matters: Beyond the Transmission Model of Transnational Diffusion between Social Movements"

[Sean Chabot](#), Sociology, Eastern Washington University

What is the significance of dialogue for our understanding of transnational diffusion between social movements? In my view, as contentious politics scholars, we need to focus more of our theoretical and empirical efforts on making sense of communication. We have to pay more attention to how people actually interact and relate to each other if we want to gain deeper insight into the complexities of transnational diffusion between social movements. The purpose of my paper and my presentation is to explore new ways of doing so. First, I will argue that the dominant model for analyzing transnational diffusion between social movements relies on a transmission model of communication. Then, I will define dialogue and propose a dialogical framework for examining transnational diffusion between social movements, with the purpose of extending the influential model proposed by Sidney Tarrow. Next, I will apply my theoretical framework to the historical case of the Gandhian repertoire's journey from the Indian independence movement to the U.S. civil rights movement. My conclusion will review my main arguments and encourage us to discuss their relevance for contemporary scholars as well as activists.

Sean Chabot is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Eastern Washington University. His dissertation focuses on the transnational diffusion of the Gandhian repertoire from the Indian independence movement to the U.S. civil rights movement. His writings have appeared in *Mobilization, Theory and Society*, *International Review of Social History*, and the volume *Globalization and Resistance* (Smith & Johnston). A chapter on nonviolent action (with Stellan Vinthagen) was recently published in *Research on Social Movements, Conflict and Change*.

“At Home in the Interstices: Transnational Black Politics and the Diffusion of Social Protest”

[Michael Hanchard](#), Political Science, Johns Hopkins University

This paper provides a brief account of the circumstances and conditions under which participants in transnational black politics have created networks and linkages among political actors and organizations in multiple national and colonial societies in the period roughly between 1946-1989. Although much of what can be defined as transnational black politics during this period fits within several analytic and interpretive schemes of social movement theory and methodological approaches, transnational black politics remains largely understudied by students of social movements as a form of contentious politics that bears some similarities-- as well as dissimilarities--with other forms of social movement mobilization. This paper utilizes the methodological innovations within the social movement literature, particularly, the scholarship of McAdam, Tilly and Beissinger to help interpret and dissect various phases and dimensions of transnational black politics as unique form of contentious politics, combining statist and non-statist activism and resource mobilization to confront issues ranging from apartheid, reparations and immigration policy in multiple national-societies, as well as through international organizations such as the International Court of Justice

Michael Hanchard is Society of Black Alumni Presidential Professor in the political science department at Johns Hopkins University. He is the author, most recently, of *Party/Politics: Horizons in Black Political Thought* (Oxford University Press, 2006). He is the co-director, along with Erin Chung, of the program on Racism, Immigration and Citizenship in the political science department at Johns Hopkins University. He holds the Ph.D. in Politics from Princeton University (1991) and has held appointments at the University of Ghana, Legon, Candido Mendes University, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and the Instituto Gramsci in Milan, Italy.

Panel II: Frames and Framing Processes in Diffusion
Friday, Nov. 9; 1:30-3:30 p.m.

“Temporality and Frame Diffusion: The Case of the Creationist/Intelligent Movement from 1925 to 2005,” [Dave Snow](#), Sociology, University of California, Irvine

Diffusion has gained increased attention in the social movement literature with much of the focus being on the “social networks” in which movements are embedded. Snow and Benford (1999) extend this work by introducing framing into the diffusion literature and examining the active and passive processes of frame transmission and adoption. This paper builds on this work by examining frame diffusion in relation to the creationist/intelligent movement(s), from 1925 to 2005, in the United States. Much previous research and writing on diffusion in social movements has sidestepped or glossed over the key variable of time, focusing instead on the spatial and structural correlates of diffusion. In this paper we take temporality seriously through the examination of how the various frames associated with the creationist/intelligent design movement have evolved and mutated over time, and explore some of the contributing factors in this adaptive process, including the counter-frames and framing strategies of the scientific/pro-evolution community. In addition to accenting the importance of time in understanding the ebb and flow of social movement frames and framing strategies across time, our analysis highlights the dynamic, interactive character of framing in relation to diffusion.

David A. Snow is Chancellor's Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Irvine. He received his Ph.D. from UCLA, and taught previously at the Universities of Texas and Arizona. He has authored publications on collective action and social movements, conversion, framing processes, homelessness, symbolic interaction, and qualitative field methods, and is co-author of, among other books, *Down on Their Luck: A Study of Homeless Street People* (with L. Anderson), *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (edited with S. Soule and H. Kriesi), *Together Alone: Personal Relationships in Public Places* (with C. Morrill and C. White), and *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis* (with J. Lofland, L. Anderson, and L. Lofland). He is currently co-authoring a book for the University of Chicago press based on an NSF-sponsored comparative study of homelessness in four global cities: Los Angeles, Paris, Sao Paulo, and Tokyo.

“Transnational Networks and Institutions: How Diffusion Shaped the Politicization of Sexual Harassment in Europe,” [Conny Roggeband](#), Sociology, Free University, Netherlands

Diffusion is often conceptualized as a random, voluntary, almost “natural” process, which is reflected in synonyms like contagion, spread or flow. In this paper, instead, I want to draw attention to diffusion as a strategic process and highlight the crucial role of framing in this. I will use the example of the way sexual harassment became a central issue across Europe to demonstrate how diffusion is a political process in which actors at different levels adopt and adapt foreign examples to make national and transnational claims and change institutional and legal settings, build alliances and exert pressure. Strategic framing efforts are central in shaping this political process and are crucial in allocating power and positions in this process.

Conny Roggeband is Assistant Professor Gender in Organisations at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam. She is a Member of the Steering Committee of Network on Identity and SocioPolitical Participation, funded by the European Science Foundation and affiliated with QUING, an Integrated Project funded by the European Union to investigate gender and citizenship in a multicultural context. Her current research explores how both state and civil society deal with specific forms of inequality, especially gender and ethnicity.

“The ’Twain Meets: Labor’s New Human Rights Movement”

[Lance Compa](#), International Labor Relations, Cornell University

When their great mid-20th century organizing drives subsided, American trade unions fell into a more bureaucratic, business-union role in society. By the end of the century, both the general public and elite opinion makers came to see workers’ organizing and collective bargaining simply as labor versus management – two big institutional entities with competing self-interests contrary to the public good. The notion that trade unions could be seen as human rights organizations was incomprehensible. Most trade unionists were oblivious to the growth of the international human rights movement in the decades following World War II. For their part, human rights advocates mostly accepted the labor-versus-management frame of workers’ collective action. But in the late 1990s, labor and human rights advocates came together to re-strategize and reframe workers’ collective action as a human rights mission rather than self-interested syndical action. A new labor-human rights alliance took shape. It built a wide-ranging discourse and agenda to frame and diffuse workers’ organizing and bargaining not as a matter of labor-versus-management, but as a matter of people exercising basic human rights. The expertise and knowledge attributable to human rights actors gave their critique of workers’ rights violations in the United States a high measure of authoritativeness compared with trade unions actors making the same claims. Critics suggest that a human rights frame moves away from a class analysis, de-emphasizing principles of industrial democracy and mass action in favor of individual rights. This is a healthy debate that advances our understanding and strategies for the future.

Lance Compa is a Senior Lecturer at Cornell University’s School of Industrial and Labor Relations in Ithaca, New York, where he teaches U.S. labor law and international labor rights. He is author of the Human Rights Watch reports *Unfair Advantage: Workers’ Freedom of Association in the United States under International Human Rights Standards* (2000) and *Blood, Sweat, and Fear: Workers’ Rights Violations in U.S. Meat and Poultry Plants* (2005).

“Worldviews, Contested Concepts, Framing, and Lack of Framing: How Enlightenment Reason Trips Up the Democrats”

[George Lakoff](#), Linguistics, University of California, Berkeley

The Enlightenment claimed that reason was conscious, universal, literal, logical, unemotional, disembodied, and interest-based. The cognitive and brain sciences have shown that this is false in every respect. But the belief hides the modes of conservative and progressive thought from a great many Democrats. It hides the underlying and unconscious progressive and conservative worldviews,

biconceptualism, the contested nature of all of our most basic political concepts, and catches Democrats in framing traps-double-binds where they help conservatives no matter what they do. The result is often a fear of framing-a fear of even mentioning the most important truths on an issue. Consequently Democrats wind up spreading the conservative worldview and framings without knowing it.

George Lakoff is a Professor of Linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley. He is also a Senior Fellow at The Rockridge Institute and member of the advisory board of the Frameworks Institute. His research focuses on cognitive linguistics, especially the neural theory of language, conceptual systems, conceptual metaphor, syntax-semantics-pragmatics, and also the application of cognitive linguistics to politics, literature, philosophy and mathematics.

Panel III: The Role of Media and Technology in the Diffusion Process
Saturday, Nov. 10; 9:30-11:30 a.m.

“Making the News: How Movement Organizations Shape the Public Agenda”

[Kenneth \(Andy\) Andrews](#), Sociology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Increasingly, scholars have come to see the news media playing a crucial role shaping whether and, if so, how social movements are able to have broader societal impacts. By conferring attention to issues, claims, and their supporters, the news media has the ability to shape the diffusion of movement claims, tactics, and ideas. If the potential cultural and political impact of social movements is indirect and operates through the media, this raises a key question about the relationship between media and social movements: Why are some social movement organizations more successful than others at advancing their claims in the media? Does movement strategy matter alongside organizational resources, issue characteristics, organizational philosophy, professionalization, bureaucratization, and spatial proximity to news sources? And, if so, what strategic orientations enhance or diminish media attention? In this paper, we investigate the differential amount and content of media attention received by a representative sample of local movement organizations. We link two distinct datasets that we collected to examine questions about media coverage. First, we conducted in-depth, structured surveys with 187 local environmental organizations in North Carolina in 2002. The surveys provide detailed information about the activities, issues, leadership, structure, resources, and strategies of each organization. Second, we conducted comprehensive media searches for eleven major daily newspapers in the state identifying and coding every article that referred to one of the 187 organizations that completed our survey in the two years following the survey; our media dataset includes 2,178 news stories, editorials, and op-ed articles mentioning an organization. Thus, we are able to assess the strategies and organizational characteristics that generate greater media attention.

Kenneth (Andy) Andrews is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His research focuses on social movements, political institutions, and social change. His book - *Freedom is a Constant Struggle* (Chicago, 2004) - examines the influence of the civil rights movement on electoral politics, school desegregation, and social policies. Andrews has been investigating the tactical diffusion and the dynamics of local protest campaigns in a study of the 1960 sit-ins, and he is completing projects on the environmental movement in North Carolina and a national study of local Sierra Club organizations.

“Protesting Online: What's Different About Being Online?”

[Jennifer Earl](#), Sociology, University of California, Santa Barbara

This paper examines two different perspectives on internet activism: a view that posits that "internet activism" is equivalent to online facilitation of offline action and a view that posits that activism can be produced and engaged in while online. Using data drawn from several small studies, as well as existing research, this paper argues that there are important shifts relevant to diffusion if one considers either form of activism, but more substantial shifts-perhaps even fundamental shifts-are evident when examining the later type of internet activism.

Jennifer Earl Jennifer Earl is an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her research focuses on social movements and the sociology of law, with research emphases on

social movement repression and protest control, the Internet and social movements, social movement outcomes, and legal change. Current projects include NSF CAREER Award-funded research on internet activism and a study of arrests made at the 2004 Republican National Convention.

“The Elitism of Media-Movement Studies”

[Thomas Olesen](#), Political Science, University of Aarhus, Denmark

The paper argues that the study of media and protest has an overly strong focus on quality newspapers. This creates an elitist bias that blinds us to the way social knowledge about protest is produced in mediated democracies. To address this weakness the paper adopts a comparative design that analyses differences in the way quality newspapers and tabloids represent protest. Empirically, the paper draws on a recent event in Denmark where youth intensely and sometimes violently protested the police’s clearing of the so-called Youth House in Copenhagen. The analysis builds on a comparison of five articles from Politiken, a quality newspaper, and five articles from Ekstra Bladet, a tabloid. The analysis is conducted on the basis of an operationalization of Lance Bennett’s notion of information biases. The two biases analyzed are dramatization and authority-disorder. The paper concludes that there are major differences in the two newspaper’s representation of the protests, but also interesting similarities. The paper closes with a discussion of the implications of these observations for democracy, social knowledge and protest.

Thomas Olesen is an associate professor at the Department of Political Science, University of Aarhus, Denmark. His research interests are media, social movements and globalization. He is currently working on a project concerning solidarity movements, communication and globalization. Thomas Olesen has published a book-length study of the Zapatistas’ global resonance: *International Zapatismo* (2005). Recently he has published two articles on the global aspects of the Muhammed cartoons crisis in Denmark in 2006.

“The Rumor That ‘John Kerry is French,’ i.e. Haughty, Foppish, Elitist, Socialist, Cowardly, & Gay”

[Jayson Harsin](#), Communications, American University in Paris

Political style, image management, and news management have become increasingly important in Western politics since WWII. The following paper, discussing an episode about John Kerry and the 2004 American presidential election, illustrates how a rumor and its subsequent image circulation invited a tabloidesque orientation to the political process for some audiences/citizens. News stories that are not ostensibly about policy initiatives or even leadership abilities are affected by lifestyle type stories that ultimately frame what some will consider to be more substantive issues of policy outlooks, experience and record, and leadership abilities. In fact, this kind of coverage, generically closer to reality TV than to traditional campaign reporting, may serve to drown out or preclude consideration of such ostensibly substantive qualities of the campaign process through powerful techniques of political branding, which ultimately serve dual political and news business purposes.

Jayson Harsin (Ph.D. Northwestern University, Communication Studies) is Assistant Professor, Dept. of Global Communications, American University of Paris. He is most recently the author of “The Rumor Bomb: A Convergence Theory of Contemporary Mediated American Politics.” *Southern Review: Politics, Communication, Culture* (Spring 2006) and “The Rumor Bomb: American Mediated Politics as Pure War.” In *Cultural Studies, an Anthology*, ed. Michael Ryan. New York: Blackwell (January 2008).

Workshop Concluding Lecture

Saturday, Nov. 10; 11:45 a.m.

“Shifting the Scale of Contention: A Form of Diffusion or a Separate Process?”

[Sidney Tarrow](#), Government and Sociology, Cornell University

Scale shift is an essential element of all contentious politics, without which contention that arises locally would remain at that level. We can define it as *a change in the number and level of coordinated contentious actions to a different focal point, involving a new range of actors, different objects, and broadened claims*. It can also generate a change in the meaning and scope of the object of the claim as a function of its transfer. As I will argue, scale shift can operate in two directions: *upward* -- in which case

local action spreads outward from its origins; or *downward*, when a generalized practice is adopted at a lower level. Today's international system both opens conduits for upward shift and can empower national, regional and local contention with international models of collective action. But by the same token, as new forms of contention diffuse downward, their original meanings may diffuse and the forms of organization they produce may domesticate. In this paper, I first offer a descriptive model of vertical scale shift. To illustrate that the process is a general one, I then apply it to the upward shift of shift from the model of the "World Social Forum" to local and national fora in individual countries. I will show that shifts in scale are not simply the reproduction, at a different level, of the claims, targets, and constituencies of the sites where contention begins; they produce new alliances, new targets, and changes in the foci of claims and perhaps even new identities.

Sidney Tarrow (PhD, Berkeley, 1965) is Maxwell M. Upson Professor of Government and Professor of Sociology at Cornell University. Tarrow's first book was *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy* (Yale, 1967). In the 1980s, after a foray into comparative local politics (*Between Center and Periphery*, Yale 1978), he turned to a reconstruction of Italian protest cycle of the late 1960's and early 1970's, *Democracy and Disorder* (Oxford, 1989). His recent books are *Power in Movement* (Cambridge, 1994, 1998), *Dynamics of Contention* (with Doug McAdam and Charles Tilly, Cambridge, 2001), *Contentious Europeans* (with Doug Imig, Rowman and Littlefield 2001), *Transnational Protest and Global Activism* (with Donatella della Porta, Rowman and Littlefield 2004), *The New Transnational Activism* (Cambridge, 2005) and (with Charles Tilly, *Contentious Politics* (Paradigm, 2006). He is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, has served as Program co-Chair of the American Political Science Association Annual Convention, President of the Conference Group on Italian Politics President of the APSA Section on Comparative Politics. He is currently interested in transnational activism on behalf of human rights and in Jonathan and Owen Rhudy-Tarrow.